

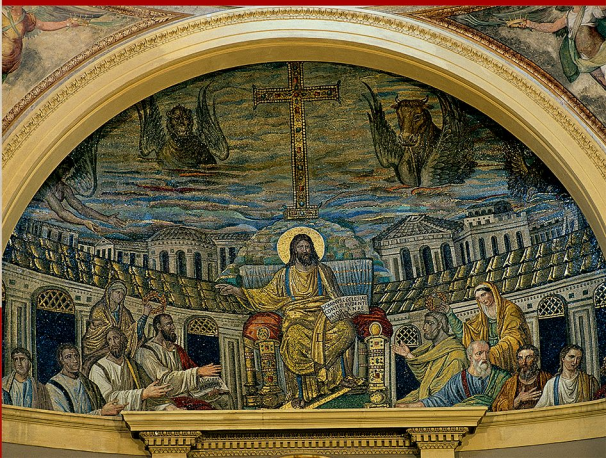
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THE ROMAN MARTYRS

Introduction, Translations, and Commentary

Michael Lapidge

OXFORD EARLY CHRISTIAN STUDIES



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The Roman Martyrs

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MICHAEL LAPIDGE

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Preface

The present volume contains translations of and commentaries on forty *passiones* of Roman martyrs, composed between roughly AD 400 and AD 700; it does not contain the Latin texts of the *passiones* in question. There are reasons why, at this stage of our research, it would not be possible to provide the Latin texts alongside the English translations: of the forty *passiones*, only one is available in anything resembling a critical edition; the remainder exist mostly in fifteenth-, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions (see pp. 40–1). Because most of these early editions are not easily accessible, the *passiones* have been neglected as a literary genre. It is my view that annotated translations represent the first stage in making these texts accessible to a wider scholarly public.

The *passiones* are works of fiction. The stories they relate concerning the martyrdoms of Roman martyrs are wholly invented, and are utterly unreliable as historical evidence. Nevertheless, the *passiones*, almost incidentally, cast fascinating light on many aspects of late antique Rome—its topography, administration, social hierarchy, and legal machinery. Above all, they help to illuminate the many Roman *titulus*-churches and cemeteries which during the centuries in question (fifth to seventh) began to attract increasingly large numbers of pilgrims and visitors. To some extent, the *passiones* are a literary response to this upsurge in pilgrim activity. In any case, these aspects of Roman life can, I think, be studied as well in translation as in the original Latin texts.

My interest in these *passiones* began when I was teaching at the University of Notre Dame (1999–2004), where the Hesburgh Library has exceptionally rich holdings in patristic literature and palaeo-Christian archaeology, and where I had the privilege of teaching a group of enthusiastic young Latinists in annual seminars on the *passiones* of the Roman martyrs. My first debt is to those Notre Dame students, particularly Leslie Lockett, who as my designated research assistant assembled a huge collection of photocopies of relevant texts and studies, and Paul Patterson, who key-boarded the texts of the *passiones* so as to constitute a machine-readable database. Since returning to the UK, I have been able to draw on the advice of Jim Adams and Michael Reeve in matters of Late Latin philology. I owe a great debt to the Bollandists, who for over four centuries have been studying and editing these texts, and whose publications are the indispensable foundation for all work in the field of Late Latin hagiography. The present-day Bollandists, in particular their Director, Robert Godding S.J., very kindly placed the resources of the Bollandists' great library at my disposal, even on occasion acquiring books for my personal use.

Gillian Clark very kindly offered a warm welcome to this book in the series Oxford Early Christian Studies, of which she is a general editor. I am especially grateful to Mark Humphries, who, as the OUP's referee, produced a meticulously detailed report which enabled me to correct numerous errors, and to improve the argument in countless ways. Although he acted anonymously as the OUP's referee, he kindly waived his anonymity so that we were able to discuss many of the issues he had raised; and I would like to add that Mark has been an enthusiastic supporter of this project over many years: indeed, it was his enthusiasm which prompted me to draw together the many years' research and put the work into its final form. Finally, Karen Raith, the desk-editor for religion at the OUP, has been warmly supportive and splendidly efficient in every way. So, too, the OUP's copy-editor, Louise Larchbourne, who worked meticulously through the typescript and helped to clarify the translations at many points, and to identify errors which I had overlooked.

Michael Lapidge

15 February 2017

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Abbreviations

AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
Acta SS.	<i>Acta Sanctorum quotquot orbe coluntur</i> , ed. Bollandists, 68 vols. (Antwerp, Tongerlo, and Brussels, 1643–1925)
BHG	F. Halkin, <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> , 3rd ed. (Brussels, 1957)
BHL	[Bollandists], <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , 2 vols. (Brussels, 1898–1901; with <i>Supplementum</i> (1986))
Blaise	A. Blaise, <i>Dictionnaire latin–français des auteurs chrétiens</i> (Turnhout, 1954)
BSS	<i>Bibliotheca Sanctorum</i> , 13 vols. (Rome, 1961–70, with three volumes of appendices, 1987, 2000, 2013)
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> (Turnhout)
CGL	<i>Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum</i> , ed. G. Goetz, 7 vols. (Leipzig, 1888–1923)
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin, 1863–)
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , ed. M. Geerard, 5 vols. and <i>Supplementum</i> (Turnhout, 1983–98)
CPL	<i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> , ed. E. Dekkers, 3rd ed. (Steenbrugge, 1995)
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna)
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> , ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, 15 vols. in 30 (Paris, 1907–53)
Du Cange	C. Du Fresne Du Cange, <i>Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis</i> , 3 vols. (Paris, 1678)
Dufourcq, <i>Gesta</i>	A. Dufourcq, <i>Étude sur les “Gesta martyrum” romains</i> , 5 vols. (Paris, 1900–7; 2nd ed., Paris, 1988)
EEC	<i>Encyclopedia of the Early Church</i> , ed. A. Di Berardino, trans. A. Walford, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1992)
EP	<i>Enciclopedia dei papi</i> , 3 vols. (Rome, 2000)
Ferrua and Carletti	Ferrua, A. and C. Carletti, <i>Damaso e i martiri di Roma</i> (Vatican City, 1985)
GCS	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i> (Leipzig and Berlin, 1897–)
ICUR	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores</i> , ed. G. B. de Rossi, 2 vols. (Rome, 1857–88); and <i>Nova Series</i> , 10 vols. (Rome, 1922–92)

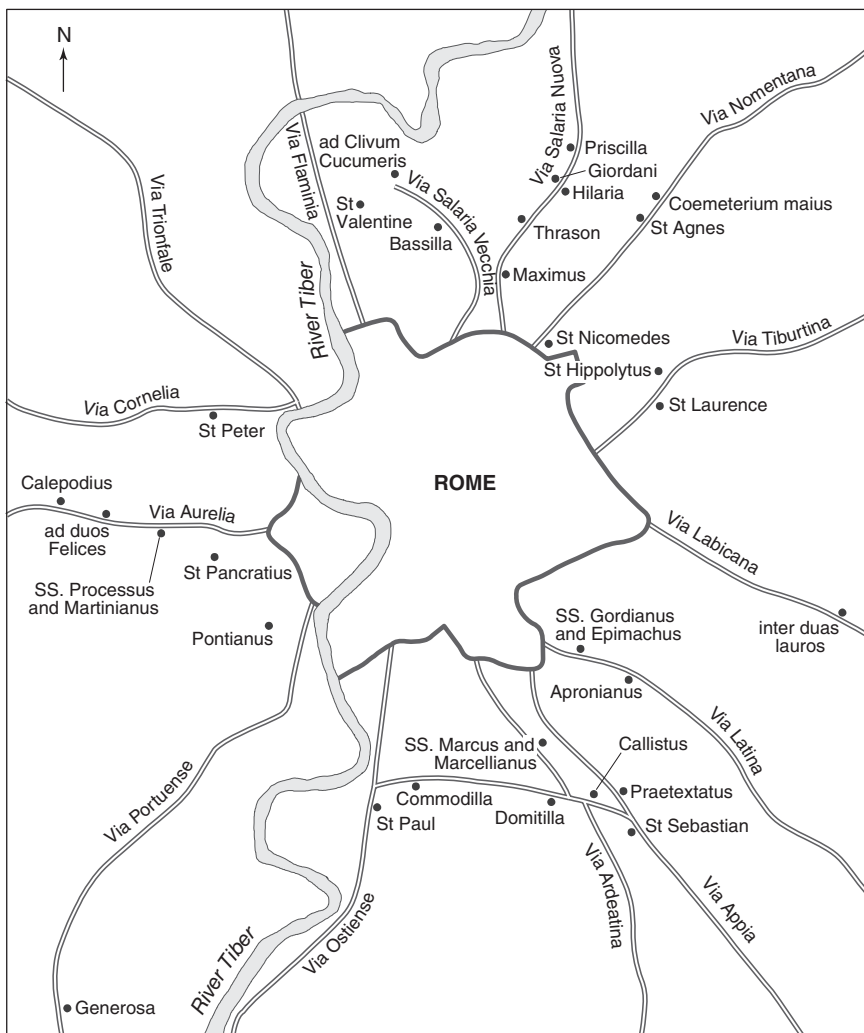
- Jones, *LRE* A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 284–602, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1964)
- Krautheimer, *CBCR* R. Krautheimer *et al.*, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, 5 vols. (Vatican City and New York, 1937–77)
- Lanéry, 'Hagiographie' C. Lanéry, 'Hagiographie d'Italie (300–550). I. Les Passions latines composées en Italie', in *Hagiographies V*, ed. G. Philippart, *Corpus Christianorum* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 15–369
- LP* the *Liber pontificalis*: ed. T. Mommsen, *Liber pontificalis (pars prior)*, *MGH, Gesta Pontificum Romanorum* (Berlin, 1898); ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1886–1957); trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, 2nd ed., TTH 6 (Liverpool, 2000)
- LTUR* *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. M. Steinby, 6 vols. (Rome, 1993–2000)
- LTUR. Suburbium* *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae. Suburbium*, ed. A. La Regina, 5 vols. (Rome, 2000–8)
- MGH* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
- MGH, AA* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
- MGH, Epistolae* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae (in quarto)*
- Mombricitus B. Mombricitus, *Sanctuarium* (Milan, 1478; ed. monachi Solesmenses, 2 vols. (Paris, 1910))
- Niermeyer J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1976)
- PG* *Patrologiae Graecae cursus completus*, ed. J. P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–66)
- PIR*¹ *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I. II. III.*, ed. E. Klebs, H. Dessau, and P. Von Rohden, 3 vols. (Berlin 1897–8)
- PIR*² *Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I. II. III.*, ed. E. Groag, A. Stein *et al.*, 2nd ed., 8 vols. (Berlin and Leipzig, 1933–2015)
- PL* *Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus*, ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–64)
- Platner–Ashby S. B. Platner, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, rev. T. Ashby (Oxford, 1926)
- PLRE* *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, I. A.D. 260–395, ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971)
- RACr* *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*
- Richardson L. Richardson, jr, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore and London, 1992)

SHA	<i>Scriptores</i> [rectius <i>Scriptor</i>] <i>Historiae Augustae</i> , ed. and trans. D. Magie, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1932)
Souter	A. Souter, <i>A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 AD</i> (Oxford, 1949)
Stotz, <i>Handbuch</i>	P. Stotz, <i>Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters</i> , 5 vols. (Munich, 1996–2004)
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Munich, 1896–)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool)

Maps



Map 1. The intra-urban churches dedicated to Roman martyrs



Map 2. Suburban cemeteries housing shrines to Roman martyrs

Introduction

The present volume contains translations, with individual introductions and commentaries, of forty *passiones* of Roman martyrs, composed for the most part at Rome itself, during a span of some 250 years, between AD c.425 and c.675. In sum these *passiones* constitute a substantial body of literature produced at a period when the literature of Rome itself—apart from the great figures of Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Gregory the Great—is not well represented; yet as a corpus they are poorly understood. They usually do not merit even a passing mention in literary histories of the period, such as Schanz–Hosius,¹ Wright–Sinclair,² or Conte.³ As Walter Berschin observed, the Latin *passiones* composed in Italy—and a fortiori in Rome—are largely a question mark.⁴ No attempt has ever been made to compile a reliable list of the *passiones* in question.⁵ There are, of course, valid reasons for the silence of literary historians. With very few exceptions, the texts are available only in editions dating from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. No attempt has ever been made to gather them together as a corpus, and only sporadic efforts have been made during the past two centuries to produce reliable scholarly editions. Furthermore, since they were composed centuries

¹ M. Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Litteratur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian*, IV/2: *Die römische Litteratur von Constantin bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk Justinians*, rev. C. Hosius and G. Krüger (Munich, 1920).

² F. A. Wright and T. A. Sinclair, *A History of Later Latin Literature from the Middle of the Fourth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1931). Wright and Sinclair treat named authors only, and provide no discussion of the substantial amount of anonymous literature from the Late Latin period.

³ G. B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. J. B. Solodow, rev. D. Fowler and G. W. Most (Baltimore, MD, 1999). Conte briefly mentions the proconsular *acta*, and such early texts as the *Passio S. Perpetuae* (pp. 599–600), but provides no discussion of the fictional *passiones* which are the subject of the present volume.

⁴ *Biographie und Epochenstil*, II, p. 173: ‘Das große Fragezeichen der italienischen Biographie des frühen Mittelalters ist die Passionsliteratur. Wieviele Passionen sind in diesem Land... geschrieben worden?’

⁵ A point made forcibly by Claudio Leonardi, ‘L’agiografia romana nel secolo IX’, in *Hagiographie, culture et sociétés IVe–XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1981), pp. 471–90, at 472. The list in *CPL* (nos. 2156–247) is a helpful beginning, but is far from complete.

after the ending of persecution of Christians, they are worthless as witnesses to the actual trial and execution of Christians in earlier times, and are vitiated by such outrageous errors of chronology that they have earned the contempt of modern historians of the later Roman empire. With few exceptions—the *passiones* of St Sebastian (III) and St Caecilia (IV), both of which were composed at Rome by Arnobius the Younger—they are the work of anonymous clerics who show little sign of advanced training in Latin and who were seldom capable of anything more than pedestrian prose. Yet scholars have long realized that, in spite of their obvious historical and stylistic deficiencies, *passiones* could help to throw light on the concerns and anxieties of the average Roman Christian during the 250 years during which they were being composed—if only they could be reliably dated. In recent years, however, great progress has been made in understanding the chronology of these *passiones*, notably by virtue of the pioneering labours of Cécile Lanéry,⁶ and it is hoped that the present volume will contribute to a further stage in our understanding of what was a very popular and very influential, if grossly neglected, genre of Christian–Latin literature.

WHO WERE THE ROMAN MARTYRS?

Many of the *passiones* translated in the present volume concern ‘martyrs’ whose claims to authenticity are dubious in the extreme. One might consider as ‘authentic’ martyrs those whose martyrdoms are recorded in the *Deposito martyrum*, hence before c.336 (Appendix I, below) or were commemorated by a metrical *titulus* composed by Pope Damasus, hence before 384 (Appendix II, below). On this criterion, those *passiones* devoted to what may be ‘authentic’ martyrs are the following: the seven sons of St Felicitas, though not St Felicitas herself (I); St Sebastian (III), St Tiburtius (III), SS. Abdon and Sennes (VI and XVI), Pope Sixtus II (VI and XVI), St Laurence (VI and XVI), St Hippolytus (VI and XVI), Pope Cornelius (VII), SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), SS. Protus and Hyacinthus (IX), St Bassilla (IX), Pope Callistus (XII), SS. Agapitus and Felicissimus (XVI), St Agnes (XVII), Pope Marcellus (XX), the Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV), SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII), St Hermes (XXXII), SS. Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII), SS. Felix and Adauctus (XXXV), and SS. Simplicius, Faustinus and Beatrix (XXXVI). Note, however, that the

⁶ Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, as well as her two important studies of Arnobius the Younger: ‘Arnobé le Jeune’ and ‘Nouvelles recherches’. There is a helpful assessment of the importance of Lanéry’s work, and of the ways in which the *passiones martyrum* were reflected in the construction and decoration of fifth-century Roman churches, by Heid, ‘Roms Selbstfindung in barbarischer Zeit’.

statement that these *passiones* treat what may be ‘authentic’ martyrs does not imply that the narratives which describe their martyrdoms are anything other than pure fiction: although someone named Sebastian may well have been martyred before or during the ‘Great Persecution’, there is no way of proving that he was chief of staff of Diocletian’s palace guard, as he is described in the *passio* bearing his name, let alone that he was martyred in the absurd way that is described in this text.

However, many, perhaps all, of the remaining *passiones* treat martyrs whose martyrdoms are patent fabrications by the authors of *passiones*. The *passiones* were confected to commemorate or publicize the founders either of intra-urban *titulus*-churches, such as St Chrysogonus (II), St Anastasia (II), St Caecilia (IV), Pope Clement (V), St Susanna (XI), St Eusebius the priest (XIII), St Pudentiana (XV), St Praxedis (XV), SS. John and Paul (XVIII), St Sabina (XXXIV), and St Bibiana (XXXVIII), or of sanctuaries or hypogean basilicas in suburban cemeteries, such as St Eugenia (IX), Pope Felix II (XIV), SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX), SS. Marius and Martha (XXII), St Pancratius (XXV), SS. Rufina and Secunda (XXXI), SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (XXXII), St Getulius (XXXIX), and St Basilides (XL).

What factors guided the Christian–Latin authors in their choice of subjects for treatment in a *passio*? Why, for example, was no *passio* ever composed for St Ignatius, a genuine Roman martyr who was executed at Rome c. AD 140?⁷ Or for Pope Fabian (236–50), who was executed during the persecution of Decius in AD 250?⁸ Instead of these genuine Roman martyrs, we are provided with *passiones* of many martyrs who were fictitious creations and in many cases cannot be proved ever to have existed. The answer seems to be that *passiones* were only composed to commemorate those martyrs who were venerated in intra-urban, *titulus*-churches, or whose remains could be visited in a prominent tomb or crypt in a suburban cemetery; in other words, that there is a clear link between the composition of *passiones* and the explosion of pilgrim interest in visiting martyr-ial sites from the late fourth century onwards. This much emerges clearly from a survey of the martyrs commemorated in surviving *passiones*:

St Felicitas (I): commemorated in an above-ground basilica in her name in the cemetery of Maximus, off the Via Salaria Nuova; her seven sons were commemorated in tombs in the various cemeteries which housed them: Felix and Philip in the cemetery of Priscilla (Via Salaria Nuova); Martial, Vitalis and Alexander in the cemetery of the Giordani (Via Salaria Nuova);

⁷ On the martyrdom of St Ignatius, see Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, pp. 6 and 77–81, and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 15–19 (demonstrating that the conventionally accepted date of 117 for the martyrdom of Ignatius is too early).

⁸ Fabian was commemorated together with other martyred popes in the famous ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus; but no church or individual shrine in Rome was ever dedicated to him.

Silvanus in the cemetery of Maximus (Via Salaria Nuova); and Ianuarius in the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia).

SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus (II): Anastasia was commemorated in the *titulus*-church of S. Anastasia on the Palatine, Chrysogonus in the *titulus*-church of S. Crisogono in Trastevere.

St Sebastian (III): commemorated in the Constantinian basilica (originally dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul) of S. Sebastiano on the Via Appia; the tomb of St Tiburtius was to be seen in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana; and that of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus in the cemetery of Basileus off the Via Ardeatina.

St Caecilia (IV): commemorated in the *titulus*-church of S. Cecilia in Trastevere; also in the crypt of St Caecilia in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.

Pope Clement (V): commemorated in the *titulus*-church of S. Clemente on the Caelian Hill.

SS. Abdon and Sennes, Pope Sixtus II, Laurence and Hippolytus (VI): the above-ground basilica of SS. Abdon and Sennes, and the crypt which housed their remains, was in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense; the tomb of Pope Sixtus II was in the famous 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia; the Constantinian basilica of St Laurence was on the Via Tiburtina (S. Lorenzo fuori le mura); and the crypt of St Hippolytus could be visited in a nearby cemetery on the Via Tiburtina (there was also a church in his name at Porto).

Pope Cornelius (VII): the crypt of Pope Cornelius was located next to the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.

SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII): the hypogean basilica of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo was a prominent feature of the cemetery of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina; there was also an intra-urban *titulus*-church in their names (formerly called the *titulus Fasciolae*) near the Baths of Caracalla.

SS. Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus (IX): St Eugenia was commemorated in an above-ground basilica built over her tomb in the cemetery of Apronianus on the Via Latina; the tombs of SS. Protus and Hyacinthus were a prominent feature of the cemetery of Bassilla (later called the cemetery of Hermes) on the Via Salaria Vecchia.

SS. Chrysanthus and Daria (X): their tombs could be visited in a crypt in the cemetery of Thrason on the Via Salaria Nuova.

St Susanna (XI): the *titulus*-church of S. Susanna was (and is) located on the Quirinal.

Pope Callistus (XII): there was a church dedicated to Pope Callistus, lying over his tomb in an identifiable crypt, in the cemetery of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia.

St Eusebius the priest (XIII): possibly to be identified with the founder of the *titulus*-church of S. Eusebio on the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele.

Pope Felix II (XIV): the basilica of this Pope Felix was located at the second mile of the Via Aurelia.

SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV): the *titulus*-church of S. Pudenziana on the Via Urbana on the Esquiline; and the *titulus*-church of S. Prassede on the Via di S. Martino (near S. Maria Maggiore), also on the Esquiline.

SS. Polychronius and others (XVI): for the churches commemorating martyrs celebrated in this *passio*, see above, no. VI.

St Agnes (XVII): commemorated in the great Constantinian basilica of S. Agnese on the Via Nomentana.

SS. Gallicanus, John and Paul (XVIII): the basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (formerly the *titulus*-church of Pammachius) on the Caelian Hill.

SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX): were buried in a crypt beneath a basilica on the Via Aurelia (site unidentified).

Pope Marcellus (XX): the tomb of Pope Marcellus was located in the hypogean basilica of Pope Silvester in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nuova; the *titulus*-church of Marcellus (S. Marcello sulla Via Lata) was located in central Rome, just off the present Corso.

SS. Primus and Felicianus (XXI): were martyrs of *Nomentum* (modern Mentana) on the Via Nomentana; their relics were transferred to the intra-urban church of S. Stefano Rotondo on the Caelian Hill during the pontificate of Theodore (642–9).

SS. Marius and Martha (XXII): the martyrs treated in this *passio* were commemorated in several relevant churches, including the basilica and cemetery of St Valentine on the Via Flaminia; the basilica of Asterius in Ostia; and the sanctuary of SS. Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc on the Via Cornelia (near the present-day hamlet of Boccea).

SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII): the crypt housing the remains of the two martyrs, and the adjacent basilica in their names (SS. Marcellino e Pietro), was located in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana.

The Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV): commemorated in the intra-urban basilica of the SS. Quattro Coronati on the Caelian Hill.

St Pancratius (XXV): commemorated in the basilica and cemetery of S. Pancrazio on the Via Aurelia.

Pope Stephen I (XXVI): was buried in the famous ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.

SS. Gordianus and Epimachus (XXVII): the church and cemetery of these two martyrs was located next to the Via Latina.

The Greek Martyrs (XXVIII): were buried in a recently-discovered cemetery beneath the remains of an ambulatory basilica near the Via Ardeatina, identified as that of Pope Marcus.

SS. Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX): were buried ‘at the sixth mile’, in a cemetery located between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis, which has never been identified.

Pope Urban (XXX): was first buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, but subsequently translated to the *domus Marmeniae* a mile or so further out on the Via Appia.

SS. Rufina and Secunda (XXXI): were buried in a prominent mausoleum at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia, the location of which has not been certainly identified.

SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (XXXII): St Cyrinus was buried in a crypt in the cemetery of Praetextatus; St Hermes in the cemetery of Bassilla (later known by his own name) on the Via Salaria Vecchia; and SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus in distinctive tombs in a cemetery beneath the above-ground basilica in their names at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana.

SS. Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII): were buried in individual tombs in the area known as the 'Region of Gaius and Eusebius' in the vast and frequently-visited cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.

SS. Serapia and Sabina (XXXIV): the famous basilica of S. Sabina on the Aventine.

SS. Felix and Adauctus (XXXV): were buried in a prominent and well-decorated hypogean basilica in Gallery B of the cemetery of Commodilla on the Via delle Sette Chiese, just off the Via Ostiense.

SS. Simplicius, Faustinus and Beatrix (XXXVI): were buried in the cemetery of Generosa *ad Sextum Philippi*, at the sixth mile of the Via Portuense, in a well-decorated crypt.

St Symphorosa and her seven sons (XXXVII): were buried in a well-marked cemetery, *ad Septem Fratres*, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina.

St Pigenius (XXXVIII): was buried in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense, and one of the principal actors in this *passio*, St Bibiana, was venerated in a prominent, intra-urban basilica near the present Stazione termini.

St Getulius (XXXIX): was buried in a cemetery near Ponte Sfondato at the twenty-ninth mile of the Via Salaria, and commemorated in a church (no longer identifiable) in the vicinity of the cemetery.

St Basilides (XL): was commemorated in a basilica at *Lorium* (modern Castel di Guido), at the twelfth mile of the Via Aurelia.

It is clear from this survey that every Roman martyr who figures in a Latin *passio* was either commemorated in an intra-urban *titulus*-church, or else was buried in a prominent and decorated crypt or hypogean basilica in a suburban cemetery. All these sites could conveniently be visited by pilgrims who travelled to Rome, as is clear from the seventh-century itineraries (Appendix IV). On the other hand, we know, from the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I) and the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III), the names of numerous Roman martyrs for whom no *passio* was ever composed: for example,

St Ignatius and Pope Fabian, both mentioned above, as well as St Timothy (buried on the Via Ostiense); St Gorgonius (Via Labicana); SS. Quartus and Quintus (Via Latina); St Victor (cemetery of Bassilla on the Via Salaria Vecchia); and St Genuinus (*inter duas lauros*). There is no record that a church or sanctuary was ever constructed for these martyrs.⁹ The conclusion seems obvious: *passiones* were composed only for Roman martyrs who were commemorated in well-known and accessible Roman churches or sanctuaries. The implication would then seem to be that, in response to the ever-growing numbers of pilgrim visitors, they were composed by clerics either of the individual *titulus*-churches, or by clerics of intra-urban churches who had responsibility for curating the shrines in suburban cemeteries.¹⁰

MARTYRDOM AT ROME: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Roman *passiones martyrum* portray the confrontation between the imperial government—the emperor and/or his magistrates—and the individual Christian, who struggles heroically to vindicate the Christian faith, but in the end loses the struggle and undergoes capital punishment and martyrdom. The focus of the confrontation is the trial; but the trial is usually preceded by an account of how the Christian was arrested, followed by a description of the torture inflicted during the trial, and then the execution of the Christian at the end of the trial.

The persecution of Christians. At any time between the principate of Nero (54–68) and the early fourth century, an individual Christian in Rome or its environs (and elsewhere in the empire, of course) might be arrested and brought for trial before a magistrate, usually either the urban prefect in Rome, or the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy (or his deputy), or the governor of one of the Italian provinces in the vicinity of Rome. Christians were brought to the attention of magistrates by the process of delation (*delatio*, ‘denunciation’); when a Christian was denounced in this manner, the magistrate was obliged to proceed with the trial (called *cognitio*). However, a guiding principle in the trial of Christians, at least in the period before 250, was enunciated in a famous rescript by the emperor Trajan, in response to a query by the Younger Pliny, who at that time was governor of Bithynia, namely that if Christians were formally denounced and the charge against them was upheld, they were to be punished, but they were not to be sought out

⁹ See Huelsen, *Le chiese*, s.vv.

¹⁰ For example, we know from a fragmentary inscription found by de Rossi in the cemetery of Domitilla that it was curated by priests of the *titulus Fasciolae* (see *ICUR* I, p. 124 [no. 262], and below, p. 205 n. 12).

(*conquirendi non sunt*), and anonymous denunciations were not to be acted on.¹¹ If convicted of a capital charge (see below), the Christian in question would be sentenced and executed.

It is simply impossible to know how many individual Christians were tried and executed at Rome as martyrs according to this normal process of law (called *coercitio*), but presumably the number was much smaller than would be suspected from the fictitious *passiones* translated here. For one thing, the informer (*delator*) who denounced a Christian ran considerable personal risk if the charge against the Christian was not proven and the case was dismissed: he [the informer] could be charged with *calumnia* ('malicious prosecution'), involving confiscation of his own property and severe punishment, and might himself undergo torture in order to establish the truth of the claim which he had made against the Christian.¹² For these reasons, legal historians speak of the repression (rather than the persecution) of Christians in the period before 250.¹³ But there were three notable occasions during this centuries-long period of time when the principle of *conquirendi non sunt* was abandoned and all Christians living in Rome were at risk of being arrested, tried and executed: namely the empire-wide persecutions, promoted by the emperors Decius (249–51), and by Valerian and his son Gallienus (257–60), and the so-called 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian and Maximian which began in February 303 and continued at Rome until 306, when it was suspended by Maximian's son Maxentius (Diocletian and Maximian having abdicated in 305).¹⁴ Although this 'Great Persecution' continued in the eastern provinces under Galerius and Maximinus, the successors of Diocletian and Maximian, until 312, Christian inhabitants of Rome and the western provinces were no longer at risk. Because these three state-sponsored persecutions figure in a number of the *passiones* (alongside a number of other persecutions which are purely the invention of the authors), they need to be described briefly here.

The persecution under Decius (249–51).¹⁵ In mid-December 249, an edict was promulgated which required all inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to

¹¹ Pliny, *Ep.* xcvi. 2: 'Conquirendi non sunt; si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt. . . . Sine auctore vero propositi libelli <in> nullo crimine locum habere debent.'

¹² See Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, pp. 100–1, and De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, p. 120.

¹³ See, e.g., Robinson, 'The Repression of Christians'.

¹⁴ There is a vast bibliography on the persecution of Christians; the following studies seem (to me) to be most helpful: *DACL* XIV/1, cols. 523–94 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'Persécutions'; Jones, *LRE*, pp. 71–6; De Ste. Croix, 'Why were the Early Christians Persecuted?', in his *Christian Persecution*, pp. 105–52; Barnes, *Tertullian*, pp. 143–63; and Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 556–85.

¹⁵ On the persecution of Decius, see Eusebius, *HE* vi. 39, vii. 1, as well as *DACL* IV/1, cols. 309–39 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'Dèce (persécution de)'; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, pp. 405–13; Clarke, 'Some Observations on the Persecution of Decius'; Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri*, pp. 75–6 and 83–5; Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 567–8; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 450–92 and 549–50; J. B. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), 135–54; R. Selinger, *Die Religionspolitik*

the gods. The precise wording of the edict has not been preserved, and of its content, only the one clause—the requirement of all inhabitants to sacrifice—is known. The edict was perhaps not intended specifically to flush out Christians, but it certainly had that effect: the earlier principle enunciated by Trajan, that ‘Christians were not to be sought out’, was suspended, and many Christians were sought out, tried, and executed. Decius himself presided at the trial of Pope Fabian, who was executed on 20 January 250. The entire populace—or perhaps simply those who were suspected of being Christians¹⁶—was required to obtain certificates from the authorities stating that they had always shown reverence to the gods and had eaten sacrificial meat to prove it. The administrative burden of issuing and recording these certificates must have been horrendous, and, in spite of the Roman passion for record-keeping, the task eventually proved insuperable, and by 251 the persecution had petered out. In any event, Decius himself was killed in battle at *Abritus* in *Moesia Inferior* (Razgrad in modern Bulgaria) in June 251; his memory was formally damned by his successor, Trebonianus Gallus, and presumably the edict of persecution was allowed to lapse.¹⁷

The persecution under Valerian and Gallienus (257–60).¹⁸ In 257, four years after his accession, Valerian resumed the persecution of Christians, but this time aimed his attack at the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Two edicts are in question but, once again, their precise wording has not been preserved. The first edict (257) apparently concerned high-ranking members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and required that they sacrifice to the gods. The tenor of the second (258), which took the form of a rescript (possibly in answer to a query raised by the senate), is known from a letter of Cyprian, which states that ‘Valerian sent a rescript to the senate, ordering that bishops and priests and deacons be summarily executed, and that senators and members of the upper classes [who were Christians] were to lose their rank and even to have their property confiscated.’¹⁹ In Rome, Pope Sixtus II and Laurence, his archdeacon, were tried and executed, on 6 and 10 August 258

des Kaisers Decius: Anatomie einer Christenverfolgung (Frankfurt, 1994), esp. pp. 77–140, and *idem, The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, pp. 53–82.

¹⁶ This is the reasonable suggestion of Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 453–5; cf. Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, pp. 59–63.

¹⁷ Cf. Clarke, ‘Some Observations on the Persecution of Decius’, p. 63, n. 1: ‘How the persecution ended is a mystery—there is no hint of a sudden, general amnesty. Cyprian’s wording suggests it merely petered out.’

¹⁸ Gallienus was Valerian’s son and co-emperor. On the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus, see Eusebius, *HE* vii. 11 and Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxx.1, with discussion in Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, pp. 423–7; Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri*, pp. 76–9 and 85–91; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 302–3 and 550–1; Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 568–73; Potter, ‘Martyrdom as Spectacle’, pp. 56–63; Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, pp. 83–94; and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 77–85.

¹⁹ Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxx. 1. 2: ‘... rescripsisse Valerianum ad senatum ut episcopi et presbyteri et diacones in continenti animadvertantur, senatores vero et egregii viri et equites Romani, dignitate amissa, etiam bonis spoliuntur’ (CCSL III C, p. 626); cf. Eusebius, *HE* vii. 11.

respectively, as we know from the correspondence of Cyprian (their martyrdoms are described in *passiones* nos. VI and XVI, where they are erroneously assigned to the principate of Decius); and in Carthage, on 14 September, Cyprian himself was executed. It is impossible to say how many more Christians were martyred at Rome during the Valerianic persecution. In any case, in 258 Valerian himself went on expedition against the Persians, where he was captured, probably in 260, and died in captivity. After the death of Valerian in 260, the persecution of Christians was terminated by Gallienus (although it seems unlikely that he issued a formal edict of toleration), and property confiscated from Christians was restored to them.²⁰ During the remaining years of the third century, Christians were left in peace,²¹ a period of peace which came to an end only with the outbreak of the so-called 'Great Persecution' in February 303.

The 'Great Persecution'²² began in February 303 and lasted in the eastern empire until 312 or 313, although in the West it had been suspended after two years, by 305 or early 306. The nature of this persecution is clear from the four imperial edicts which were promulgated: the First Edict (23 February 303) specified that all Christian churches were to be destroyed, all copies of the scriptures were to be surrendered, and all ecclesiastical furniture was to be confiscated; the Second Edict, probably issued during spring or summer 303, ordered the arrest of all Christian clergy (there is no evidence that this edict was ever promulgated in the West); the Third Edict, which was perhaps issued to coincide with the vicennalia of Diocletian in November 303, ordered an amnesty for Christian clergy on condition that they sacrificed; and the Fourth Edict, probably issued in January or February 304, required all inhabitants of the empire to sacrifice to the gods (there is little evidence that the Fourth Edict was enforced in the West).²³ Immediately after the publication of the First Edict, the 'Great Persecution' got under way in Nicomedia, when the Christian church opposite the imperial palace was demolished, and many martyrdoms followed during the next decade. In the West, however, the persecution of Christians seems to have been pursued much less vigorously and, according to Eusebius, had not completely expired in the West after two years; that is to say, it was evidently losing its impetus in the West by 305.²⁴ After becoming Caesar

²⁰ See L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, 1976), esp. pp. 175–85.

²¹ See Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 573–4, and Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 553–6.

²² The so-called 'Great Persecution' has been extensively studied: most important are the studies by Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, pp. 477–535; De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 35–78 ['Aspects of the "Great" Persecution']; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 592–608; Davies, 'The Origin and Purpose of the Persecution of A.D. 303'; Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 97–150; and Twomey and Humphries (eds.), *The Great Persecution*.

²³ Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, pp. 179–82, and De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 35–8.

²⁴ *HE* viii. 13. 10.

(in 306), Constantine allowed full freedom of worship to Christians living under his authority in Britain, Gaul, and Spain and restored any church property which had been confiscated in 303 as a consequence of the First Edict. In mid-306 Maxentius formally ended persecution in Italy and Africa, but did not restore confiscated church property, which was not restored until Miltiades became pope in 311. (In the East, persecution continued under Galerius until his death in 311, and then under Maximinus until 313.) The answer to the question of how many Christians were martyred at Rome during the 'Great Persecution', that is, between 303 and 305, cannot easily be determined.²⁵ In the *Depositio martyrum*, two martyrdoms are specifically assigned to the year of the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian, that is, AD 304: those of Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII), and of Bassilla (IX).²⁶ Probably there were more; but the numbers were no doubt much smaller than what might be inferred from *passiones* such as that of St Sebastian (III).

Finally, several *passiones* refer to a 'persecution' under the emperor Julian 'the Apostate' (361–3): those of Gallicanus, John, and Paul (XVIII), Gordianus and Epimachus (XXVII), and Pigenius (XXXVIII). This is historical nonsense. Although Julian was a committed pagan, he took no measures against Christians except for forbidding them to hold chairs of rhetoric and philosophy, and closing the church in Antioch as a means of calming disturbances (caused by Christian mobs); certainly he did not mount a persecution in any meaningful sense of the word.²⁷

What is striking is that relatively few of the *passiones* translated here are attributed to these three major episodes of empire-wide persecution. Five are attributed to the persecution of Decius, but all these attributions are erroneous: one of them mentions the persecution of Decius, but the martyrdoms in question are described as having taken place under Valerian (XXVIII); another concerns Pope Cornelius, who died in 252, a year after the death of Decius (VII); two others concern martyrs such as Pope Sixtus II and St Laurence, who are known from reliable historical sources (the letters of Cyprian) to have died in 258 during the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus (VI and XVI); finally, one martyrdom is assigned—erroneously—to the

²⁵ Cf. the comment of De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, p. 68: 'in the West, where the persecution ceased before it had properly developed, we need not be surprised to find very few martyrdoms indeed, except of volunteers or of those who defied E[dict] 1.'

²⁶ The author of the *passio* of St Eugenia (IX), in describing the martyrdom of Bassilla, was apparently unaware of the entry in the *Depositio martyrum*; instead, he absurdly assigned Bassilla's martyrdom to the reign of Gallienus.

²⁷ On Julian's measures against Christians, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxii. 10. 7 and xxii. 13. 2; for modern studies of his reign, see Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (London, 1975), pp. 159–86, esp. 163: 'In fact there was no persecution'; and G. W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (London, 1978), pp. 79–83.

Decian persecution, namely that of Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII); but, as we have seen, these two martyrs are recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* as having been executed under Diocletian and Maximian in AD 304. The martyrdoms in only two *passiones* are attributed to the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus: those of Pope Stephen I (XXVI) and of SS. Rufina and Secunda (XXXI). The martyrdoms in seven *passiones* are assigned to the 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian and Maximian: those of Sebastian (III), Susanna (XI), Pope Marcellus (XX), Primus and Felicianus (XXI), Pancratius (XXV), Felix and Adauctus (XXXV), and Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI). In other words, only ten of the forty *passiones* assign the martyrdoms which they describe to historically-documented periods of persecution; the remainder are assigned to persecutions which, quite simply, are figments of their authors' imaginations.

The charges against Christians. A Christian might in principle be arrested and charged with any one of a number of capital charges:²⁸ *maiestas* (that is, essentially, treason, but also including slander of the emperor and his family, i.e. *lèse-majesté*),²⁹ *flagitia* ('abominations'), sorcery, divination and prophecy, sacrilege (*sacrilegium*), atheism, and possibly illegal association (belonging to a secret society).³⁰ However, the most frequently attested charge, both in historical sources and in the fictional *passiones*, is that of the *nomen Christianum*. The exact legal status of this charge is problematic, and much debated. A. N. Sherwin-White argued that, because of suspected *flagitia*, 'the *nomen* [*Christianum*], active membership of a criminal organization without further proof of individual guilt is constituted a capital charge, by direct magisterial action, that is, by an *edictum* with or without support of a senatorial decree. The charge is enforced by *coercitio*, normally through the procedural form of *cognitio*. The *nomen* then acts as a pointer to the magistrate, indicating a man whom it is proper for him to coerce as a malefactor, if accused.'³¹ In other words, the *nomen Christianum* was a useful pointer for prosecuting magistrates, but was not a statutory prohibition; in the words of Olivia Robinson, 'the *nomen* simply defines a class of potential subversives.'³² Nevertheless, although the statutory position of the *nomen Christianum* in

²⁸ Robinson, 'The Repression of Christians', p. 285: 'It begins to seem possible that there was no single legal ground for repression, that it fell under different offences at different times.'

²⁹ On *maiestas*, see Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, pp. 74–8, and Chilton, 'The Roman Law of Treason', as well as the earlier but valuable study by De Regibus, 'Storia e diritto romano negli "Acta martyrum"', pp. 145–9.

³⁰ There is debate among legal historians whether Christians were ever charged with membership of an illegal society (*collegium illicitum*); see Robinson, 'The Repression of Christians', pp. 284–5, and De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 123–4.

³¹ Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, p. 781.

³² Robinson, 'The Repression of Christians', p. 285. She continues: 'Was the *nomen* a conventional, a customary, classification, a way of referring to the adherents of something—unspecified in general, but particularized when need arose—which could be dangerous to the

Roman law is unclear, the most frequent charge against Christians in the fictional *passiones* is that of the *nomen Christianum*;³³ other charges, notably *maiestas*,³⁴ *magicae artes*,³⁵ and *sacrilegium*,³⁶ can often be inferred, although they are never spelled out. This is probably another respect in which the *passiones* depart from historical reality.

The trial. A trial (*cognitio*) might be conducted in the magistrate's private chambers (*in secretario*), or in public, at one of the venues used for public hearings, such as the portico of the temple of Mars Ultor;³⁷ but wherever the trial was conducted, the execution of the condemned criminal took place in public. The authors of the fictional *passiones* attempted to recreate the atmosphere and procedures of Roman criminal trials.³⁸ Unfortunately, they had very little authentic evidence on which to base their accounts. Although the Romans were a nation of bureaucrats, and kept detailed court records (called 'protocols') of all criminal trials, including those of Christians, not a single one of these court records has survived (in Latin) from Rome itself.³⁹

state? What do we know of the facts of the repression of Christians?' (*ibid.* pp. 258–66). Cf. De Regibus, 'Storia e diritto romano negli "Acta martyrum"', pp. 139–40.

³³ For examples, see III.3, IV.2, IV.29, VI.3, XVI.7, XVII.5, XXIV.6, XXXIV.1, and XXXVI.1.

³⁴ Examples of what could have been regarded as *maiestas* include: Caecilia's statement to the prefect Almachius that his emperors are in error: 'Sic imperatores vestri errant sicut et nobilitas vestra. Sententia . . . testaris vos saevientes' (IV.29); the response of Pope Cornelius to the soldiers arresting him, 'Pereant dii daemoniorum simul cum Decio' (VII.3); the insinuation of Polychronius together with the reply of Decius, 'Ergo nos stercora sumus?' (XVI.2); Diocletian and Maximian saying to Primus and Felicianus, 'Vos estis, qui iussa nostra contemnitis et pro nihilo computabis' (XXI.2); the judge Almachius describing Marmenia as someone 'qui praecepta deridet principum invictissimorum' (XXX.14); and the sentence passed against St Sabina: 'Sabinam . . . dominos quoque et Augustos nostros blasphemantem, gladio percuti decrevimus' (XXXIV.14).

³⁵ The charge of magic could be inferred from the urban prefect's words to Tiburtius, 'Quis ignorat magicam vos docuisse Christum vestrum' (III.82); another prefect's words to St Eugenia, who is described as being 'quasi magicis artibus plena' (IX.20); Nemesius is tried by Valerian on the grounds 'et ut consulem . . . Maximum interficeretis tuis magicis artibus' (XXVI.6); the emperor Julian says of St Ianuarius, 'hunc cognovimus magum esse' (XXVII.3); and Vitellius the judge charges SS. Eusebius, Pontianus, and the others with magic: 'Isti confidunt de magia' (XXIX.6).

³⁶ Examples of sacrilege include the statement of Probus the prefect to Anastasia: 'Hoc sacrilegium nec aures meae admittere queunt' (II.24) and his further statement that she is to die 'ut decet sacrilegam' (II.25); the emperor Trajan's rescript to his urban prefect mentions that the Roman populace is urging that Pope Clement is 'ob criminis sacrilegii accusandum' (V.6); what the emperor Decius says to St Polychronius, 'Tu es Polychronius sacrilegus' (XVI.2); and the emperor Claudius' instructions to his prefect concerning St Valentine, 'fac in eum quod in sacrilegum leges praedixerunt' (XXII.8).

³⁷ See De Regibus, 'Storia e diritto romano negli "Acta martyrum"', pp. 172–3 (trial *in secretario*), 173–5 (trial *in foro*).

³⁸ There is valuable discussion of the legal aspects of the trials of Christians by De Regibus, 'Storia e diritto romano negli "Acta martyrum"'; his focus, however, is on pre-Decian *acta martyrum* rather than on the fictional *passiones*, with the exception of the *Passio S. Clementis* (my no. V), mentioned briefly at p. 183 in the context of condemnation *ad metalla*.

³⁹ Cf. De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, p. 58: 'There is no trace of any contemporary attempt to preserve records of the deeds of the Roman and Italian martyrs, and as early as the

they had already been lost by the time Prudentius visited Rome c.400,⁴⁰ and Gregory the Great states in a letter to Eulogius that no accounts of Roman martyrdoms were to be found either in the Lateran archives or in any library in Rome.⁴¹ The form of a protocol or trial record is, however, known from a number of papyrus fragments (in Greek) surviving from Egypt,⁴² and from these fragments it is possible to deduce that a protocol consisted of three principal parts: the introduction (*κεφάλαιον*), which provided the date, the names of the persons involved in the trial, and the name of the presiding magistrate; the investigation or body of the trial itself (*ἀνάγνωσις*, corresponding to *cognitio* in the Roman *passiones*), consisting of the speeches of the magistrate and the defendants, usually recorded in *oratio recta*, introduced by such verbs as *εἶπεν*, *ἀπεκρίνατο*, etc.; and finally the verdict (*κρίσις*) of the magistrate.⁴³

But although no authentic records of the trials of Christian martyrs in the Latin West have survived, there were various literary accounts in Latin—based on, or at least inspired by, authentic but lost protocols—which appear to have been composed before or during the Decian and Valerianic persecutions, and which are thought by modern scholars to preserve a reliable record of martyr trials.⁴⁴ These literary accounts are referred to as *acta*; and, in cases where the presiding magistrate was a proconsul (in Africa the senior magistrate was a proconsul, corresponding to the governor in other Roman provinces), are called *acta proconsularia*. Two such *acta proconsularia* are relevant here: those of the Scillitan martyrs [BHL 7527], and those of St Cyprian [BHL 2037]. The *acta proconsularia* of the Scillitan martyrs record the proceedings of a trial of twelve Christians (six men and six women) who were tried and executed in Carthage on 17 July 180.⁴⁵ As in trial protocols, the *acta* begin with a

time of Pope Damasus (366–84) they were already more or less legendary figures, about whom “traditions” circulated, based on no written documents.’

⁴⁰ See Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, p. 18, n. 3.

⁴¹ *Registrum epistularum* viii. 28 [to Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria]: ‘nulla [sc. gesta] in archiuo huius nostrae ecclesiae uel in Romanae urbis bibliotecis esse cognoui’ (CCSL CXLII, p. 549).

⁴² A convenient list of surviving protocols is provided by Coles, *Reports of Proceedings in Papyri*, pp. 55–63.

⁴³ For the individual parts of a protocol, see Coles, *ibid.* pp. 29–38 (introduction), 38–49 (speeches), and 49–52 (verdict); see also Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, pp. 125–31; Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, pp. 249–51; and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 54–66. I have not seen H. Niedermeyer, *Über antike Protokoll-Literatur* (diss. Göttingen, 1918).

⁴⁴ See Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri*, pp. 23–7, and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 64–82. In an earlier study, Barnes observed of the *acta* of the Scillitan martyrs, that ‘the Scillitani were tried “in secretario”: hence, if the *acta* are not pure fiction, they ought to derive from an official record’ (‘Pre-Decian *Acta martyrum*’, p. 528).

⁴⁵ Since the martyrs were brought for trial to Carthage, it is clear that their place of origin—Scilli (?)—must have been somewhere in the province of *Africa proconsularis*; but its precise location has never been identified, and it is not recorded in Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*.

statement that the trial was held in the year in which Praesens was consul for the second time and Claudianus for the first (corresponding to AD 180),⁴⁶ on 17 July, in private chambers (*in secretario*), with Saturninus the proconsul presiding. The interrogation by Saturninus and the replies by the Christians are reported in *oratio recta* (*Saturninus dixit; Speratus dixit*, etc.). After the interrogation, during which the Christians refuse to recant, Saturninus remands them in custody for thirty days, to allow them to come to their senses (*moram .xxx. dierum habete et recordemini*); when they are brought back from prison, Speratus, speaking for the others, says simply ‘Christianus sum’. Saturninus reads his verdict from a tablet (*decretum ex tabella recitauit*) that, since they have confessed to being Christians and have obstinately refused to return to Roman custom (*ad Romanorum morem*), they are to be executed by sword (*gladio animaduerti placet*); the verdict is then read out by the court herald (*Saturninus proconsul per praeconem dici iussit*).⁴⁷ Nearly eighty years later Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was tried at Carthage before Paternus the proconsul. The *acta proconsularia* of Cyprian are longer and more elaborate—and no doubt further removed from the original but lost protocols—than those of the Scillitan martyrs, insofar as the *acta* record the events of two separate trials, held a year apart, under two successive proconsuls; but in other respects the structure follows that of trial protocols. The *acta* of Cyprian begin with the statement that the trial was held in the year in which Valerian was consul for the fourth time, and Gallienus (his son and co-emperor) for the third (that is, in AD 257), on 30 August, in private chambers (*in secretario*), with Paternus the proconsul presiding. The interrogation then proceeds in *oratio recta* (*Cyprianus episcopus dixit, Paternus proconsul dixit*, etc.), as a result of which Paternus banishes Cyprian to *Curubis* (Korba in modern Tunisia), from whence he returns a year later, apparently of his own volition. Then, the *acta* go on to explain, in the consulship of Tuscus and Bassus (AD 258), two officers from the staff of Galerius Maximus, who had succeeded Paternus as proconsul, brought Cyprian before Galerius for trial, which is stated to have taken place on 14 September of the same year. Galerius ordered Cyprian to sacrifice (*caeremoniari*), to demonstrate that he adhered to Roman custom, but he refused. Galerius consulted his legal advisers and

⁴⁶ It should be noted that the consular dating given in the text is not entirely accurate: the second consul of 180 was Sextus Quintilius Condianus, not Claudianus: which indicates that we are dealing here with a literary elaboration, not with an authentic trial protocol. The first consul of 180 was correctly C. Bruttius Praesens (*PIR*², I, pp. 372–3 [no.165]), and the proconsul of Africa in that year was P. Vigellius Saturninus (*PIR*² VIII/2, p. 335 [no. 633]), who is described by Tertullian as the first African governor to have put Christians to death (*Ad Scapulam* 3–4).

⁴⁷ Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri*, pp. 137–44; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, pp. 86–9; and Bastiaensen, *Atti e passioni dei martiri*, pp. 100–4. See discussion by Delehay, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 47–9, and by Barnes, ‘Pre-Decian *Acta martyrum*’, pp. 519–20, and *idem*, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 64–6.

then read his verdict from a tablet (*decretum ex tabella recitavit*), namely that Cyprian the bishop was to be executed by sword (*gladio animaduerti placet*). Cyprian was led to the place of execution and duly executed; at nightfall his body was recovered (by Christians) and buried triumphantly in the cemetery of Macrobius Candidianus on the Mappalian way.⁴⁸

From these *acta proconsularia*, and perhaps from some of the early *passiones* of African martyrs⁴⁹ and other sources as well,⁵⁰ the Roman authors of *passiones* derived the structure and detail of their narratives of trial proceedings. But it is also likely that some of the detail derived from familiarity with contemporary trial procedure: the form and procedure of a criminal trial before a prefect or governor probably changed very little between the late second century (when the Scillitan martyrs were tried), and the fifth and sixth centuries, when the majority of the *passiones* were composed.⁵¹ For the later, as much as for the earlier period, no authentic trial protocols survive; but there is a revealing glimpse of a criminal trial in a Greek–Latin school dialogue, composed probably in the late fourth century, to illustrate (and provide the vocabulary for) the sort of scene a traveller to a foreign province might encounter in a strange forum:

Before dawn, the prefect and the governor and the head of imperial finances and the army commander and the procurator have gone on ahead to the forum. You hear the voice of the herald summoning the decurions and the citizens . . . It turns 9.00 a.m. In come the legal advisers, the lawyers, the advocates, called into the chambers of the judge (who is to preside over the case in which they are

⁴⁸ Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri*, pp. 184–93; Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, pp. 168–75; and Bastiaensen, *Atti e passioni dei martiri*, pp. 206–31. See discussion by Delehay, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 62–9, and by Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 77–82, who suggests that the second part of the trial—that held in 258 under Galerius Maximus—is not based on an authentic protocol but, since the (second) trial and execution were held in public, may be the report of an eyewitness (p. 81).

⁴⁹ Such as the *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (BHL 6633; ed. C. J. M. J. Beek, *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (Nijmegen, 1936)) and the *Passio SS. Montani et Lucii* (BHL 6009; ed. F. Dolbeau, 'La Passion des saints Lucius et Montanus: Histoire et édition du texte', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 18 (1983), 39–82).

⁵⁰ For example, the so-called *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (cf. CPL 244 *ad calc.*) describe the trial of one Victor of Cirta, a deacon of the Donatist church brought before Zenophilus, the governor (*consularis*) of Numidia, in 327 AD; as described, the trial began with questions designed to establish the name and status of the defendant (whether *honestior* or *humilior*): 'quis uocaris?', 'cuius condicionis es?', and 'cuius dignitatis es?' (CSEL XXVI, p. 185; see discussion by P. W. Hoogterp, 'Deux procès-verbaux donatistes', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 15 (1940), 39–112, at 48–50, 108–12, *et passim*); a similar line of questioning is found in a number of the fictional *passiones*.

⁵¹ Cf. the comments of Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', p. 243: 'Les formes d'administration, la procédure criminelle en particulier, n'avaient point subi d'interruption . . . Aussi, la présence de détails techniques et de bonnes formules juridiques dans les Actes des martyrs ne révèle-t-elle nullement l'existence d'une source primitive?' (p. 243); ' . . . au moment où se rédigeaient les Actes, la préfecture urbaine subsistait toujours' (p. 246).

involved). They plead several cases, each as best he can according to his verbal eloquence. Some of the cases are in their final stages, which I think are going to be wound up today. Then the governor comes down (from his chambers) to sit at the tribunal of the overseer. The tribunal is set up. The judge mounts the tribunal and, through the voice of the herald, asks the people to stand. The accused man, a thief, stands (before the tribunal); he is questioned as he deserves; he is tortured; the interrogator (*quaestionarius*) beats him, his breast is injured, he is strung up, he is beaten with staves, he is flogged, he goes through the entire sequence of tortures, and still denies (his guilt). He is to be punished; he is to die by capital punishment: he is led away to be executed by sword.⁵²

The authors of *passiones* did not follow the earlier texts in every respect, and in many cases must have been influenced by their own familiarity with trial procedure, as illustrated in the quoted passage. Thus, in place of the dating by consular year which was an indispensable part of trial protocols and was reproduced as such in *acta proconsularia*, the fictional Roman *passiones* usually begin with a less precise chronological reference to the principate or dominate during which the martyrdom is said to have occurred: 'In the days of the emperor Decius', 'In the days of the wicked emperors Diocletian and Maximian', *vel sim.*: apparently consular datings were considered too technical to be readily understood by the Christian lay audiences for whom the *passiones* were composed. Then, following the arrest of the Christian(s) concerned, and presentation before the magistrate, either in private chambers (*in secretario*) or at a public hearing, the interrogation ensues, as in the protocols and the *acta proconsularia*. In the *passiones*, the interrogation is frequently conducted under torture; as we have seen, torture is not mentioned in the protocols and the *acta proconsularia*, but is very much a part of the trial depicted in the above-quoted schoolbook. Frequently, too, as in the *acta* of the Scillitan martyrs, the martyr is remanded in custody for a period (sometimes a month) in order to come to his senses. In the *passiones*, the magistrate is sometimes described as having repeated his question, as to whether the defendant was a Christian, three separate times. Although no such repetitions are found in the above-cited *acta proconsularia*, we know that it was

⁵² A. C. Dionisotti, 'From Ausonius' Schooldays? A Schoolbook and its Relatives', *Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982), 83–125, at 104–5: 'ad forum ante lucem... quoniam praefectus, praeses, et rationalis et dux et procurator praecesserant. Audis vocem praeconis citantem decuriones et cives... Fit hora tertia. Ingrediuntur advocati, causidici, scholastici evocati in secretarium iudicis sui. Agunt plures causas, quisque ut potest secundum literarum facundiam. Sunt et causae in temporum finem, quas hodie credo terminandas. Exinde descendit praeses ad tribunal custodis sessurus. Sternitur tribunal, conscendit iudex tribunal, et sic voce praeconis iubet sisti personas. Reus sistitur latro; interrogatur secundum merita; torquetur, quaestionarius pulsatur, ei pectus vexatur, suspenditur, †crescit, flagellatur fustibus, vapulatur, pertransit ordinem tormentorum, et adhuc negat. Puniendus est; perit poena; ducitur ad gladium'. Cf. MacMullen, 'Judicial Savagery', pp. 155–6.

conventional trial procedure from a letter of Pliny the Younger.⁵³ In the end, having received affirmative replies to his thrice-repeated question, the magistrate delivers his verdict: but whereas sometimes the verdict is repeated by a court herald (*praeco*), there is no example in the fictional *passiones* of a judge reading out his verdict from a tablet. The martyr is then led out to execution, which in the *passiones* may take forms other than decapitation by sword (see below). In most *passiones*, the body of the martyr is recovered and buried triumphantly by pious Christians, as in the *acta* of St Cyprian.

LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF MARTYRDOM: THE 'EPIC PASSIO'

The *passiones* translated in this volume are all works of pure fiction,⁵⁴ belonging to a genre which was defined by the great Bollandist Hippolyte Delehaye as the 'epic *passio*'.⁵⁵ By use of this term Delehaye wished to suggest that the main characters of these fictional works were conceived by their authors as epic heroes: 'The hero belongs to a superior race. The battle from which he emerges as victor raises him above all the other heroes of literary history. But it is not simply a question of a victory by brute force; it consists in flooring a very formidable enemy—the powers of darkness as embodied in paganism. In this struggle the martyr is the champion of God, who fights on his behalf, and renders him invincible;⁵⁶ and again, 'this mortal, even before having made his self-sacrifice, has entered into glory: he is the epic hero' (*le héros d'épopée*).⁵⁷

The 'epic *passio*' could take somewhat different forms. On one hand, it might treat the trial and martyrdom of a single martyr, as in the case of Eusebius the priest (XIII), Pope Felix II (XIV), St Pancratius (XXV), or St Basilides (XL). Typically, however, the principal figure of the story—the 'epic hero' in Delehaye's words—was associated with a number of other persons, who were either Christians to begin with, or who through the hero's preaching and example were converted to Christianity, were baptized, and were subsequently martyred. Sometimes a number of *passiones* were strung together to create what Delehaye on another occasion referred to as 'epic cycles'

⁵³ *Ep.* x. 96. 3: 'Confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi, supplicium minatus; perseverantes duci iussi'. This practice is alluded to in the *passio* of St Sebastian, where the martyr Castulus is 'tertio appensus, tertio auditus, in confessione Domini perseverans' (III.83).

⁵⁴ There is an excellent characterization of the nature and content of Roman *passiones martyrum* by Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 15–41.

⁵⁵ For the definition of 'epic' *passiones martyrum*, see Delehaye, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', pp. 236–52, and esp. *idem*, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 171–226.

⁵⁶ Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs*, p. 172. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 173.

(*cycles épiques*):⁵⁸ narratives in which a number of separate martyrdoms are grouped around an individual martyr. Delehayé cites as examples of ‘epic cycles’ the *passiones* of St Anastasia (II), St Sebastian (III), SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), St Eugenia (IX), and St Polychronius (XVI). And these *passiones*, all of which date from the fifth or very early sixth century, served in turn as models for later epic *passiones*, those of Pope Marcellus (XX), Marius and Martha (XXII), Pope Stephen (XXVI), the Greek martyrs (XXVIII), Pope Urban (XXX), and others.

As we have seen, trial protocols were very brief documents, and the *acta proconsularia* exhibit commendable brevity. With the fictional *passiones*, however, the opposite is the case: many of them are protracted to almost intolerable length by various means, the longest being the *passio* of St Sebastian, which runs to ninety chapters, and involves a large cast of Christians and martyrs. The amplification is achieved by means of speeches—the second part of the original trial protocols—and by the introduction of other Christians who are related somehow to the principal martyr, and who also suffer martyrdom. The narrative structure of these fictional ‘epic’ *passiones* may be summarized as follows.

In the days of such-and-such an emperor, there was vigorous persecution of Christians. A certain Christian comes to the notice of the authorities. The Christian is accordingly brought for trial before a magistrate. In some *passiones*, the Christian is remanded in the custody of an official of the court, often a prison registrar (*commentariensis*), either in prison or in the official’s private residence.⁵⁹ The official then tells the Christian that he has a relative (wife, son, or daughter) who is suffering from a serious illness, and asks the Christian for assistance. The Christian is able, with divine support, to cure the illness, whereupon the official asks for himself and his household to be baptized; a priest or bishop is brought and the baptisms are performed. As a result of his conversion and baptism, the newly-converted Christian is himself brought for trial before a magistrate and, after interrogation, is sentenced to capital punishment. Meanwhile the original Christian is also brought for trial; when asked by the magistrate the reasons for such insane behaviour, the Christian delivers a harangue on Christian doctrine, or else enters into a lengthy exchange with the magistrate. In the end, the magistrate remains unconvinced by the Christian’s arguments and the Christian is asked to sacrifice; on refusal to sacrifice the Christian is beaten and tortured at length, all the while confessing the faith: so vehemently and inflexibly does the

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 222, and *idem*, *Cinq leçons*, pp. 34–5: ‘Elles ont ceci de caractéristique qu’au lieu d’être les Actes d’un saint, elles groupent autour d’un martyr célèbre, qui devient comme le héros du cycle, une série d’autres martyrs, qui en réalité n’ont eu avec lui aucune relation, mais qu’on fait évoluer, dans son voisinage, avec d’autres personnages secondaires, réels ou imaginaires entre lesquels on se plaît à établir des liens de famille.’

⁵⁹ On this practice, see Robinson, ‘Private Prisons’.

Christian refuse to cooperate with the magistrate's requests that his/her behaviour can be described only as 'voluntary martyrdom'.⁶⁰ Finally the Christian is executed. Pious Christians recover the martyr's body and give it decent burial. In some *passiones*, divine retribution is visited on the persecuting magistrate.

It will be seen that this simple framework offered many possibilities for expansion: the number of persons who come into contact with the original Christian martyr and then seek to become Christians can be extended so as to create a lengthy concatenation of converts; the ceremony of baptism can be described in detail; the martyr's exposition of Christian doctrine may be drawn out, sometimes to tiresome length, and not infrequently may incorporate detailed denunciation of the pagan gods; and the tortures which the Christian suffers may be described in excruciating detail. The 'epic *passio*' thus became a flexible vehicle for the expression of matters which were of primary concern to the Church between the fifth century and the seventh: exposition of correct Christian doctrine (and the implied rejection of heretical doctrine), denunciation of (continuing) pagan practices, praise of virginity, etc. We may consider briefly the individual elements which provide the framework of individual *passiones*.⁶¹

Arrest and trial. In a very few cases, a Christian in the *passiones* is brought by means of a denunciation to the attention of a magistrate: thus St Anastasia is denounced, by way of a sort of 'citizen's arrest', before the prefect of *Illyricum* by an unnamed citizen (II.20); Torquatus formally denounces St Tiburtius to the urban prefect (III.77); and the prefect Almachius reminds St Caecilia that there are accusers (*accusatores*) at hand who can testify that she is a Christian ('*accusatores praesto sunt qui te Christianissimam esse testantur*'): presumably it is these 'accusers' who have been responsible for bringing Caecilia to the attention of the magistrate in the first place (IV.29). The trial itself begins when the magistrate mounts the tribunal; all those present are asked to stand (XXI.2: '*ex officio dictum est: "Adstant"*'), and the magistrate, through the voice of a herald (*praeco*) or an interrogator (*quaestionarius*) asks the defendants to be brought in (XXIII.6: the deputy

⁶⁰ A helpful term devised by De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 45, 131–3, and esp. 153–200 ['Voluntary Martyrdom in the Early Church']. In his discussion of 'voluntary martyrdom', De Ste. Croix specifically excludes the *passiones* which are the subject of the present book: 'Nor have I paid any attention to the considerable quantity of late and fictitious *passiones* in which the martyrs are made to behave in a provocative manner and abuse their judges' (p. 165).

⁶¹ Delehaye (*Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 173–218) discusses the *topoi* of epic *passiones* under the following headings: 'Les personages' ('L'empereur et son édit', 'Le juge et son personnel'); 'Interrogatoire et discours'; 'Les supplices'; 'Les miracles' (including 'Visions', 'Voix célestes', and 'Chatiment des persécuteurs'). I have modified Delehaye's list of *topoi* to accommodate the Roman *passiones martyrum* translated here (nearly all of Delehaye's examples are drawn from Greek, not Latin, *passiones*).

‘iussit Marcellinum...et Petrum...intromitti sub voce quaestionaria’). In a few *passiones* the magistrate is described as initiating the trial by asking for the Christian’s name and rank: thus Sisinnius questioning St Irene: ‘Quod tibi nomen est?’ (II.15); Almachius asking St Caecilia, ‘Quod tibi nomen est?... Cuius conditionis es?’ (IV.28); the emperor Maximian asking the martyr St Sisinnius ‘Quis vocaris?’ (XX.4); the prefect Sapricius asking St Tertullinus to state his name and rank: ‘Nomen tuum edicito...servus es, an ingenuus?’ (XXVI.16); Gordianus the deputy asking St Ianuarius ‘Quis vocaris, vel ex qua natione te esse ostendis...edicito nobis’ (XXVII.1); and Almachius the prefect asking Lucinia to state her rank and profession, ‘Dicite...cuius conditionis estis? aut quae est professio vestra?’ (XXX.15). (In other *passiones*, such procedural details are omitted.) Then follows the interrogation itself (sometimes, but rarely, described correctly as *cognitio*). In a few cases, the defendant is remanded in custody for thirty days (as in the *acta proconsularia*) to allow time for reflection (e.g. in the *passio* of St Sebastian, SS. Marcus and Marcellianus are remanded in custody for thirty days: III.4). When the defendant is brought back to the tribunal, the magistrate reads out the sentence, as in the *passio* of St Sebastian: ‘Fabianus dictavit sententiam, dicens, “Blasphemator deorum et reus...gladio animadvertatur”’ (III.82), or in that of Pope Stephen: ‘iussitque...dicta sententia, capite truncari’ (XXVI.19). From these random details it is evident that some at least of the authors of *passiones* had some rough understanding of trial procedure; but it will also be clear that, in comparison with the authors of the *acta proconsularia*, they were not principally concerned to record accurately the details of this procedure.

The emperor. In some of the *passiones*, the trial is conducted by the emperor himself: thus trials are described as being conducted in person by Commodus (XXIX), Decius (VI and XVI),⁶² Valerian and Gallienus (XXVI), Diocletian alone (II), and Diocletian and Maximian together (XXI).⁶³ But whether or not the emperor is shown conducting the trial in person, in most of the *passiones* of Roman martyrs, the historical context in which the martyrdom took place is signalled at the very outset of the *passio* by mention of the emperor(s) under which the events took place, even if the emperor in question takes no further

⁶² There is evidence that Decius did conduct trials himself, as in the case of the Christian Celerinus, and Pope Fabian (January 250): see Clarke, ‘Some Observations on the Persecution of Decius’, pp. 64–5, and Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, p. 568. The authors of the *passiones* in question are most unlikely to have known this.

⁶³ The depiction in the *passiones* of martyrs appearing before an emperor (or emperors) is not per se historically false: Decius, for example, is known to have conducted the trials of Celerinus and Pope Fabian in person (see previous note). But the involvement of emperors is depicted in absurd terms in some of the *passiones*, for example in that of SS. Primus and Felicianus, where the two martyrs are portrayed discussing at length the Christian verities with *both* Diocletian and Maximian (XXI.2) who, as we know from historical sources, may only have been briefly together in Rome in AD 303, on the occasion of Diocletian’s *vicennalia*.

part in the narrative.⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, the majority of *passiones* are situated either during the brief principate of Decius, who initiated a large-scale persecution, or of Diocletian and Maximian, that is to say, during the so-called 'Great Persecution'. I provide a conspectus of the principates and dominates during which the *passiones* are situated: Claudius (41–54): XXII (?); Nero (54–68): XIX; Vespasian (69–79): XXXIV; Domitian (81–96): VIII; Nerva (96–8): V; Trajan (98–117): V, VIII, XXXII; Hadrian (117–38): XXXVII, XXXIX; Antoninus Pius (138–61): I (?), XV; Commodus (180–92): IX, XXIX; Macrinus (217–18): XII; Alexander Severus (222–35): IV, XII, XXX; Philip the Arabian (244–9): XXXIII; Decius (249–51): VI, VII, XVI, XXVIII, XXXIII; Valerian and Gallienus (253–60): XXVI, XXXI; Gallienus alone (260–8): IX; Claudius II 'Gothicus' (268–9): XVI, XXII (?); Numerian (283–4): X; Diocletian alone (284–305): II, XXIV; Diocletian and Maximian (285–305): III, XI, XX, XXI, XXV, XXXV, XXXVI; Constantine (306–37): XVIII; Constantius (337–61): XIII, XIV, XVIII,⁶⁵ and Julian (361–3): XVIII, XXVII, XXXVIII.

However, the simple listing of these imperial dates gives a misleading impression of the historicity of the contexts in which the *passiones* are situated. In fact the chronological details provided by the authors of *passiones* are frequently, if not invariably, ludicrously inaccurate.⁶⁶ A few examples will illustrate this point. In the *passio* in her name (IX), St Eugenia is said to have been sixteen years old in the year of the seventh consulship of Commodus (i.e. AD 192), hence she was born in 176; but she and her mother Claudia are eventually martyred under Gallienus (sole emperor from 260–8), implying that Eugenia was about eighty years old, and her mother perhaps over 100, at

⁶⁴ There are five exceptions to this generalization: St Caecilia (IV), where the narrated events can be assigned to the early third century through the mention of Pope Urban (222–30); St Agnes (XVII), where various details indicate that the martyrdom took place during the 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian and Maximian (which at Rome lasted from 303 until it was suspended by Maxentius in 306); SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII), where the content of an epigram by Pope Damasus quoted by the author allows the martyrdom to be assigned to the 'Great Persecution'; the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII), where no emperor is named, but the events are dated precisely to AD 265 by reference to the consuls of that year; and St Basilides (XL), where no indication whatsoever is given of the date at which the reported events are supposed to have taken place.

⁶⁵ It may seem odd that martyrdoms occurred under these two very Christian emperors; but in fact that which allegedly took place under Constantine occurred not in Rome but in Alexandria (XVIII.7), where (one must assume) Constantine's amnesty of Christians was not yet in force; and those which took place under Constantius involved Christians who were deemed by Constantius—a fervent Arian—to be heretics (XIII.2, XIV.3; the martyrdoms described in XVIII in fact took place under the emperor Julian, who is said (XVIII.7) to have been made emperor by Constantius).

⁶⁶ An exception is the *passio* of Pope Urban (XXX), where the author, relying on historical sources such as SHA and Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius' Chronicle, has made a conscientious—but not error-free—effort to situate the pope's martyrdom in the early third century. Needless to say, perhaps, modern Roman historians would scarcely regard the SHA as a reliable source for third-century history.

the time of their martyrdoms: yet Eugenia's colleague in Rome, Bassilla, the niece of Gallienus, is said to have been baptized by Pope Soter—who held the pontificate from 162–70, a century before Gallienus, and several years before Eugenia was born. In the *passio* of St Polychronius and others (XVI), the emperor Decius (249–51) and an urban prefect named Valerian (!) are said to have presided over the trial and execution of Pope Sixtus II and St Laurence—who we know from reliable sources such as the letters of Cyprian to have been executed in August 258 during the persecution of the *emperor* Valerian, seven years after the death of Decius. The martyrdoms of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII) and their sons are said to have taken place during the principate of 'Claudius'—either the first Claudius (41–54) or Claudius II 'Gothicus' (268–70)—yet the principal character in their *passio* is Pope Callistus (217–22), whose pontificate fell in neither principate. In the *passio* of the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII), the action of which is dated precisely to AD 265, the year of the consuls Valerian and Lucillus, and Valerian—who is distinct from the *emperor* Valerian, who had died in Persia in 260—announces the existence of secret communities of Christians to the emperor Decius, who had died fourteen years earlier in 251. Finally, in the *passio* of Pope Urban (XXX), the 975th year *ab urbe condita* is wrongly dated to AD 230 (it correctly fell in 222) 'in the sixth indiction' (!). Indictions were devised by Diocletian, who abdicated in 305, and were not recorded before AD 313. These are just a few of the absurd errors committed by the authors of the *passiones* in their attempt to provide a plausible chronological framework for their narratives.

The magistrates. It was well within the power of Roman emperors simply to order the execution of criminals without a hearing. Such practice is attributed to Alexander Severus in the *passio* of Pope Callistus (XII); to Antoninus Pius in that of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV); to 'Claudius' in that of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII); and to Diocletian in that of Pancratius (XXV). However, this practice occurs rarely in the *passiones*, because the sentencing of Christians to execution without trial would have deprived the author of the opportunity of allowing them to expound the doctrines of their faith to the presiding judge, and the Christians' lengthy vindications of their faith are a prominent feature in most *passiones* (see below). Accordingly, therefore, the trials of Christians are depicted as taking place before judges of various ranks. On rare occasions, as we have seen, an emperor is described as conducting a trial himself (always, of course, assisted by legal advisers). However, an emperor's duties prevented him from participating in the day-to-day business of criminal trials, and from the second century onwards the responsibility for conducting criminal trials was delegated to imperial magistrates, notably in the first instance the urban prefect,⁶⁷ subsequently the praetorian prefect and his deputies, and then provincial

⁶⁷ See Bauman, *Crime and Punishment*, pp. 100–14; Bauman notes (p. 114) that it was Septimius Severus who formally defined the jurisdiction of the urban prefect, empowering him to try all crimes committed within 100 miles of Rome.

governors of various ranks. Thus trials in the *passiones* are most frequently depicted as being conducted by the urban prefect: Publius (I), Lucillius (II), Agrestius Chromatius (III), Fabian (III), Turcius Almachius (IV), Mamertinus (V), Anianus (VIII), Decius (IX), Celerinus (X), Valerian (XVI), Symphronius (XVII), Caesarius (XIX), Laodicius (XX), Calpurnius (XXII), Maximus (XXVIII), Turcius Almachius (XXX), Junius Donatus (XXXI), Libanius (XXXIII), and Dracus (XXXV). With one exception—Junius Donatus, who was urban prefect in AD 257—all of these urban prefects are fictitious. Only in a few *passiones* are trials depicted as being conducted by praetorian prefects: Probus, praetorian prefect of *Illyricum* (II) and Helpidius, praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy (XXXIV).⁶⁸ Criminal trials might also be conducted by the deputy (*uicarius*) of either prefect, and deputies figure frequently in these Roman *passiones martyrum*: thus Vitellius Anisius, described as the deputy of the praetorian prefecture of the East (*Oriens*), presides in the *passio* of SS. Polychronius and others (XVI); trials are conducted by deputies of the urban prefect of Rome, named Aspasius (XVII), Carpasius (XX), Muscianus (XXII), Serenus (XXIII), Vitellius (XXIX), and Carpasius again (XXX).⁶⁹ Finally, as the empire grew beyond manageable size, it was further necessary to delegate jurisdiction in criminal trials to provincial governors of various ranks (*proconsul*, *consularis*, and *praeses*),⁷⁰ and several *passiones* represent provincial governors conducting trials of Christians: thus Dacianus, the governor (*proconsul*) of Africa (IX); Nicetius the governor (*consularis*) of Bithynia (II) and Memmius Rufus, governor (*consularis*) of Campania (VIII); and Dulcitius, governor (*praeses*) of Macedonia (II), Promotus, governor (*praeses*) of Valeria (XXI), and Berillus, governor (*praeses*) of Tuscia and Umbria (XXXIV).⁷¹

The sermons delivered by the martyrs at their trials. All the *passiones* translated here contain some amount of sermonizing in various forms by Christians as they seek to vindicate their belief in the face of uncomprehending magistrates, or to convince non-believers and waverers of the need either to

⁶⁸ In two cases, it is not specified whether the prefect conducting the trial is the urban or the praetorian prefect: Marcus (XXVI) and Sapricius (XXVI). In the *passio* of St Eugenia, Philip the prefect of Egypt conducts her trial (IX).

⁶⁹ Several trials are conducted by deputies whose prefecture is not specified: Gordianus (XXVII), Clementianus (XXVII), and Annius (XXX).

⁷⁰ See Garnsey, 'The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors'.

⁷¹ On two occasions, trials are conducted by a magistrate described simply as a 'count' (*comes*), without further specification: Sisinnius (II) and Flaccus (VIII). In two other cases, criminal trials are described as being conducted by magistrates who were members of the imperial *comitum*: thus Paulinus, described as Master of the Offices (*magister officiorum*), in the *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX), and Aurelian, described as Master of Foot and Horse (*comes utriusque militiae*) in the *passio* of SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (XXXII).

convert to the faith or to be resolute in their belief. But in a small number of *passiones* this tendency is taken to extreme lengths:

SS. *Anastasia and Chrysogonus* (II): an epistolary exchange in which Chrysogonus succeeds in confirming the faith of Anastasia (II.4–7); Chionia, Agape and Irene harangue Diocletian on the tenets of their faith (II.10–11); Irene harangues Count Sisinnius (II.17); Anastasia debates with Probus, the praetorian prefect (II.21–5), and then debates with Lucilius, the urban prefect (II.32–3).

St Sebastian (III): Sebastian delivers a lengthy sermon to Marcus and Marcellianus and their families on the need to be resolute in their Christian faith (III.9–22); Marcus delivers a sermon to his family on the benefits of Christian faith (III.27–8); Sebastian harangues a group of potential converts in the house of Nicostratus (III.29–30); Tranquillinus (the father of Marcus and Marcellianus, now converted and baptized) debates at length with Chromatius, the urban prefect (III.38–46); Sebastian explains to Chromatius the need for spiritual purity before conversion and baptism can take place (III.51–7).

St Caecilia (IV): St Caecilia debates with Tiburtius her brother-in-law on the need for conversion (IV.10–15); Tiburtius and Valerian (Caecilia's husband) debate with Turcius Almachius, the urban prefect, on the nature of Christian belief (IV.17–20); Caecilia harangues Turcius Almachius on the wickedness of his pagan beliefs and the virtues of the Christian faith (IV.28–30).

SS. *Nereus and Achilleus* (VIII): Nereus and Achilleus take turns delivering a long harangue to Domitilla, their mistress, on the delights of virginity and the perils of married life and childbirth (VIII.3–8); Domitilla later explains the virtues of virginity to Euphrosyne and Theodora (VIII.21–2).

SS. *Chrysanthus and Daria* (X): Chrysanthus debates at length with Daria, a Vestal Virgin, on the nature of Christian belief and the absurdities of pagan religion (X.8–13).

SS. *Agnes and Emerentiana* (XVII): St Agnes explains the reasons for her virginity (and refusal to marry) to the son of the urban prefect (XVII.3); she then makes similar explanations to Symphronius, the urban prefect himself (XVII.6–7).

SS. *Primus and Felicianus* (XXI): Felicianus explains his faith to Promotus, the governor (XXI.4); Primus then explains his faith to the same governor (XXI.5).

SS. *Marius and Martha* (XXII): St Valentine debates the nature of Christian belief with the emperor Claudius (XXII.6–7).

Pope Stephen I (XXVI): Nemesius the military tribune debates the merits of Christian belief with the emperor Valerian (XXVI.6).

SS. *Rufina and Secunda* (XXXI): Rufina engages in debate about Christian belief and the merits of virginity with the prefect Junius Donatus (XXXI.2–4); Secunda is then brought in and continues the debate (XXXI.5–6).

SS. *Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus* (XXXII): Pope Alexander delivers a sermon on the miraculous nature of Christ to fellow-prisoners (XXXII.11); he then delivers an exposition of Christian faith to Aurelian, the Master of Foot and Horse (XXXII.15).

SS. *Calogerus and Parthenius* (XXXIII): Parthenius delivers a lengthy sermon on Christian belief as expounded in the gospels to the urban prefect Libanius (XXXIII.4).

St *Basilides* (XL): St Basilides delivers a lengthy denunciation of the absurdities of pagan religion (XL.3–4).

Some of these ‘sermons’ reveal an impressive depth of learning, particularly in biblical texts, but also in the intricacies of Christian doctrine.

Tortures and executions. Roman society consisted of two broad classes: the *honestiores* and the *humiliores*.⁷² The *honestiores*, or upper classes, were made up of citizens of the senatorial and equestrian orders; the *humiliores*, or lower classes, consisted of freeborn citizens of low income, slaves, and emancipated slaves (*liberti*). At least in the early centuries of the principate, Roman law dealt very differently with these two classes. In capital cases, convicted *honestiores* were sentenced to deportation or relegation (except in cases where the charge was *maiestas*, in which case the sentence was summary execution).⁷³ *Honestiores* were not subject to torture, at least in the early centuries of the principate. With *humiliores*, however, the law dealt with extraordinary brutality: *humiliores* underwent torture of varying degrees of severity, and when sentenced to death, were typically either burned alive (*vivicomburium* or *crematio*) or exposed to the beasts (*condemnatio ad bestias*);⁷⁴ in each case the execution typically took place as part of a spectacle (*munus*) in a public place such as an amphitheatre. Sometimes a sentence of capital punishment was mitigated either to condemnation to work in the mines (*condemnatio ad metalla*) or to work on public building projects, such as roads (*condemnatio ad opus publicum*). When sentenced to death, by contrast, *honestiores* were

⁷² On the two broad social classes (*honestiores* and *humiliores*), see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 517–22, and Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 153–72, and 221–8 (*honestiores*); see also Bauman, *Crime and Punishment*, pp. 124–40 (‘The Growth of Criminal Jurisprudence’).

⁷³ On the difference between relegation (*relegatio*) and deportation (*deportatio*), see Isidore, *Etym.* v. 27. 28–9, who distinguishes these two forms of *exilium*, according to which someone who was ‘relegated’ could retain his wealth and property, whereas the person ‘deported’ could not do so; in short, *relegatio* was non-capital exile, but *deportatio* (or *interdictio aqua et igni*) was a capital sentence. In any case, exile was to a place within the Roman empire, not beyond it, and deportation to an island. See helpful discussion by Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 104 and 111–22.

⁷⁴ Cf. the *Sententiae* of the third-century jurist Paulus: ‘his [sc. *honestioribus*] antea in perpetuum aqua et igni interdicebatur; nunc vero *humiliores* bestiis obiciuntur vel vivi exuruntur, *honestiores* capite puniuntur’ (v. 29. 1). On the background to *vivicomburium* in the Republican period, see J. Gagé, ‘*Vivicomburium*. Ordales ou supplices par le feu dans la Rome primitive’, *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 42 (1964), 541–73, and (briefly), Cantarella, *I supplizi capitali in Grecia e a Roma*, pp. 236–7.

executed by decapitation, which was thought to be a more humane method of execution; they were not, in any event, expected to undergo the humiliation of being burned alive or savaged by beasts as part of a public spectacle. There were, of course, exceptions to these generalizations;⁷⁵ furthermore, over the centuries penalties became harsher, with the result that even *honestiores* were subjected to degrading forms of torture.⁷⁶

The tortures and executions described in the forty *passiones* translated here broadly reflect the practice implied by these generalizations. With few exceptions, the martyrs of the *passiones* are described as belonging to the upper classes. In a very few cases, upper-class martyrs are sentenced to exile, either by relegation, as in the case of Domitilla (VIII.10), or by deportation (Pope Cornelius (VII.1) and the senator Maximus (XI.23), and probably Pope Clement (V.6) and Gallicanus (XVIII.7)).⁷⁷ Most of the remaining *honestiores* are executed by decapitation (see below). However, in almost every case, martyrs—whether they are *honestiores* or *humiliores*—are described as undergoing torture of various kinds. Here, too, the tortures described fall within the limits of what might have been accepted as common practice in the late Roman empire.⁷⁸ The various forms of torture undergone by martyrs may be summarized as follows:

⁷⁵ Perpetua, a high-born aristocrat, was executed at Carthage in AD 203 by being exposed to beasts: *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, vi. 6: 'tunc nos uniuersos pronuntiat et damnat ad bestias'.

⁷⁶ See Garnsey, 'Why Penalties became Harsher', esp. pp. 150–2, and MacMullen, 'Judicial Savagery', pp. 162–4.

⁷⁷ In the case of Domitilla (VIII.10), the author simply states that she was to 'undergo exile' (*subiret exilium*); the sentence was apparently non-capital exile, or *relegatio*, since Domitilla was allowed to take her household with her to exile in Ponza. In the case of Pope Cornelius, the exile is specified as 'deportation' (VII.1: *exilio deportari*), and similarly in the case of the senator Maximus, the *Comes rei privatae*, who is sentenced to be 'deported' to *Comos* (*Cuma*?): '<Maximum> ... deportari in civitate C(h)omos' (XI.23). In the case of Pope Clement (V.6), it is merely stated that he is 'to undergo exile' (*subire exilium*); but since the place of exile lies far outside the bounds of the Roman empire on the Black Sea, we may be permitted to assume that *deportatio* rather than *relegatio* is in question here. Gallicanus is sentenced to exile outside of Italy (XVIII.7: 'discede a finibus Italiae'); the author does not specify whether the exile is capital or non-capital, but since the issue involved is the seizure of Gallicanus' property, the sentence is presumably *deportatio* rather than *relegatio*. It is far from clear that the authors of the *passiones* understood the legal distinction between *relegatio* and *deportatio*.

⁷⁸ Delehaye describes a number of examples of severe tortures protracted absurdly over many days (*Les passions des martyrs*, pp. 202–6); he concludes, 'Il suffit de lire quelques-unes des nombreuses Passions de cette catégorie pour s'assurer que les hagiographes ne tiennent aucun compte de la vraisemblance' (p. 206). Nearly all Delehaye's examples are taken from Greek *Passiones*. The tortures undergone by Roman martyrs in the *passiones* translated in the present volume fall within reasonable (if brutal) limits, an exception being the eighty-year-old St Primus, who has molten lead poured down his throat, and drinks it as if it were ice-cold water (XXI.5). Among the many examples of preposterous tortures described in *passiones*, the case of St Primus is the only example from a Roman *passio* cited by Delehaye.

Stretching on the rack (horse-frame): VIII.16, X.26, XVI.3, XVI.25, XIX.7, XX.8, XX.19, XXI.4, XXII.12, XXII.18, XXVI.8, XXVI.15, XXVI.17, XXVIII.13, XXIX.6, XXXII.14, XXXII.17, XXXIII.3;

Being raked while on the rack: with iron ‘thistles’: VI.8, XVI.23, XVI.30; with claws: XVI.3, XX.19, XXII.18, XXXII.17, XXXIII.4;

*Flogging and beating:*⁷⁹ with fists (XXIII.6); with staves (I.5, II.31, IV.21, X.18, XI.28, XII.7, XVI.5, XVI.24, XVI.26, XVI.27, XVI.30, XVIII.8, XIX.7, XX.8, XX.9, XX.17, XX.19, XX.20, XXI.5, XXII.12, XXII.15, XXII.18, XXVI.8, XXVI.15, XXVI.22, XXVII.3, XXVIII.12, XXIX.4, XXIX.6, XXX.18[9], XXXI.6, XXXII.13, XXXIV.11, XXXIX.8; with lead-weighted whips (*plumbatae*): I.5, IV.24, VII.1, VIII.17, XII.8, XVI.9, XVI.23, XVI.24, XVI.27, XVI.31, XX.9, XXI.4, XXIV.22, XXVIII.14, XXIX.11, XXX.13[4], XXX.18[9]; with scorpion-whips (*scorpiones*): XVI.23, XVI.25, XIX.8, XX.8, XXIV.19, XXIV.20, XXX.18[9];

Application of torches or red-hot plates: XVI.3, XVI.24, XVI.27, XXVI.15, XXVI.17, XXVIII.13, XXIX.6, XXXII.17, XXXIV.10.

In addition to these (conventional) methods of torture, there are cases of torture where the martyr’s tongue is cut out (XXIX.8, XXXII.14), the martyr’s mouth is smashed in with stones (VI.8, XVI.30, XX.8, XXVI.16), his/her hands and feet are cut off (XXII.18), s/he is placed in a boiling cauldron (XXXI.6), the martyr’s legs are locked in stocks (X.16, XXIII.6), or the martyr is wrapped tightly in a moist calf-skin, which is then allowed to dry and shrink in the sun (X.16). It should also be noted that, in several cases, virgins are tortured by being forced into prostitution (II.18, XVII.8, and XXXIV.5).

Following the torture, the martyr is executed in various ways. Sometimes (unsurprisingly), the martyr simply dies while being beaten: III.88, IV.24, XVI.31, XVIII.8, XX.9, XXIV.22, XXVI.22, XXVIII.12, XXVIII.14, XXIX.4, XXIX.11, XXXI.8, and XXXVIII.4. In the great majority of cases, however, the martyr is executed by decapitation. I list all the examples which occur in the *passiones* simply to show that, in the imagination of their authors, execution by

⁷⁹ Peter Garnsey provides valuable discussion of the various kinds of beating that were inflicted on prisoners (*Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 136–41); and, on the various instruments used in beatings, see *DACL* V/2, cols. 1638–43 [H. Leclercq], s.v. ‘Flagellation (supplice de la)’. Essentially, there was a distinction between *verberatio*, a heavy beating, and *castigatio*, a light beating with staves (*fustes*), subsequently described as *fustigatio* (the noun *fustigatio* occurs only once in the *passiones*, at XXXII.13). Beatings were originally administered by ‘switches’ (*virgae*), but the ‘switches’ were subsequently replaced by ‘staves’ (*fustes*), in much the same way as the sword replaced the axe as the instrument of civilian execution (Garnsey, *ibid.* p. 137): the difference being that a *virga* or ‘switch’ was flexible, but a *fustis* or ‘(military) staff’ was stiff: the former would do more superficial damage, the latter might well break bones. It may be significant that in the *passio* of St Felicitas—arguably the earliest of the *passiones* translated here—St Ianuarius is described as having been ‘lashed with switches’ (*virgis caedi*: I.3), whereas in the remaining *passiones*, without exception, the beatings involve *fustes* (‘staves’).

beheading was for the Romans the most common form of capital punishment: I.5, II.8, III.82, IV.31 [failed], VI.4, VII.3, VIII.18, VIII.24, IX.19, X.20, XI.28, XII.6, XIV.3, XVI.3, XVI.18, XVI.26, XVI.31, XVI.34, XVI.35, XVIII.13, XIX.9, XX.6, XX.8, XX.20, XXI.7, XXII.15, XXII.19, XXIII.11, XXV.4, XXVI.11, XXVI.14, XXVI.17, XXVI.21, XXVII.5, XXVIII.12, XXVIII.13, XXIX.8, XXX.15[6], XXX.19[10], XXX.25[16], XXXI.8, XXXII.14, XXXII.19, XXXIV.11, XXXIV.15, XXXV.2, and XL.6. But in several *passiones*, execution is carried out by one of the sentences specified for *humiliores*: thus there are examples of burning alive (*vivicomburium*): II.16, II.31, II.36, VI.7, VIII.25, XVI.28 [on an iron grill], XXVI.13, XXXII.19 [in a furnace], XXXIII.6 and XXXIX.7; and of exposure to beasts (*condemnatio ad bestias*): VI.3, XVI.9, XXI.6 and XXII.13.⁸⁰ The *passiones* also describe executions by methods which are not specified in the Roman law-codes, such as death by drowning, usually in the Tiber (II.35, V.7, IX.20, X.20, XI.23, XII.8, XII.9, XXIV.20 [in lead caskets], XXVIII.9, XXXI.7, XXXVI.1, XXXVII.4 and XXXVIII.5), or death by being buried alive (III.83, X.26, XIII.2, XXIII.9 and XXIII.10). A final point: in the period before the fourth century, criminals were frequently executed by crucifixion, but Constantine abolished the use of crucifixion as a means of execution. It is therefore striking that, in all forty *passiones* translated here, there is not a single example of execution by crucifixion.

Christians recover and bury the martyrs' bodies. After the martyrs had been executed, it was necessary for their bodies to be treated reverently, and, in most cases, for them to be buried in the shrines and cemeteries by which they were subsequently known. Authors of the *passiones* accordingly took great care to describe the process of removal of the martyrs' bodies, invariably by stealth and by night, and to specify the places where they were buried. I list these events as they are described in the *passiones*.

SS. *Anastasia and Chrysogonus* (II): Zoilus recovers and buries the body of St Chrysogonus (II.9); the bodies of Chionia, Agape, and Irene are recovered and buried by men dispatched by Anastasia (II.16–18); Apollonia recovers and buries the body of St Anastasia (II.36).

St *Sebastian* (III): Irene recovers the body of Sebastian from the Field of Mars after he has been shot with arrows (III.86); Lucina recovers the body of St Sebastian from the Cloaca Maxima and buries it on the Via Appia *ad catacumbas* (III.89).

St *Caecilia* (IV): Pope Urban recovers and buries the body of St Caecilia on the Via Appia (IV.32).

⁸⁰ It is interesting that the proportions of these various means of execution described in the *passiones* are broadly similar to those calculated by J.-P. Callu on the basis of the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Eusebius, where he notes twenty-three examples of decapitation, eleven of burning alive, and five of condemnation *ad bestias* ('Le jardin des supplices', p. 333).

SS. *Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus* (VI): unnamed Christians recover the body of Pope Sixtus II and bury it in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia (VI.4); Hippolytus recovers and buries the body of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina (VI.7); unnamed Christians recover and bury the body of St Hippolytus, also on the Via Tiburtina (VI.8).

Pope Cornelius (VII): Lucina and other Christians recover the bodies of Pope Cornelius, Cerealis, and his wife, and bury them on the Via Appia (VII.3).

SS. *Nereus and Achilleus* (VIII): the priest Nicomedes recovers and buries the body of St Felicula on the Via Ardeatina (VIII.17); the priest Justus recovers and buries the body of St Nicomedes (VIII.17); Auspicius recovers the bodies of SS. Nereus and Achilleus and buries them in the cemetery of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina (VIII.18); the deacon Caesarius recovers the bodies of Domitilla, Euphrosyne, and Theodora and buries them in Terracina (VIII.25).

SS. *Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus* (IX): Eugenia recovers the body of Philip her father and buries it in Egypt (IX.16); unnamed Christians recover and bury the body of St Eugenia on the Via Latina (IX.21).

SS. *Chrysanthus and Daria* (X): Hilaria collects and buries the bodies of her martyred sons, Maurus and Jason, on the Via Salaria (X.20).

St *Susanna* (XI): Serena Augusta recovers and buries the body of St Susanna on the Via Nomentana (XI.29).

Pope Callistus (XII): unnamed fishermen recover the body of Calepodius and bury it on the Via Aurelia (XII.6); Asterius recovers the body of Pope Callistus and buries it in the cemetery of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia (XII.9); unnamed Christians bury the body of Asterius in Ostia (XII.9).

Eusebius the priest (XIII): the priests Gregory and Orosius recover the body of Eusebius and bury it on the Via Appia (XIII.2); Orosius subsequently recovers the body of Gregory and buries it next to that of Eusebius (XIII.2).

Pope Felix II (XIV): unnamed priests and clerics bury the body of Pope Felix II on the Via Aurelia (XIV.3).

SS. *Pudentiana and Praxedis* (XV): Praxedis and the priest Pastor bury the body of St Pudentiana in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria (XV.4); Pastor the priest buries the body of St Praxedis in the same place (XV.8).

SS. *Polychronius and the martyrs of Rome* (XVI): Abdon and Sennes recover and bury the bodies of SS. Parmenius, Elymas, Chrysotelus, Lucius, and Mucius in Cordula in Persia (XVI.3); unnamed Christians bury the bodies of Olympiades and Maximus in Persia (XVI.6); Cyrinus buries the bodies of SS. Abdon and Sennes near the amphitheatre in Rome (XVI.10); unnamed Christians recover and bury the body of Pope Sixtus II in the

cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia (XVI.18); Justinus the priest recovers and buries the body of St Romanus in the *Ager Veranus* on the Via Tiburtina (XVI.26); Hippolytus and Justinus recover the body of St Laurence and bury it on the Via Tiburtina (XVI.29); Justinus recovers and buries the body of St Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina (XVI.32); Justinus recovers and buries the bodies of Concordia, Irenaeus, and Abundius next to the body of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina (XVI.32); Justinus recovers and buries the body of Cyrilla next to St Laurence (XVI.34); Justinus and John recover and bury a multitude of Christians, including Theodosius, Lucius, Marcus, and Peter on the Via Salaria (XVI.35).

SS. *Agnes and Emerentiana* (XVII): the parents of Agnes recover her body and bury it on their own estate on the Via Nomentana (XVII.13); the parents of Agnes also recover and bury the body of St Emerentiana in the vicinity of that of St Agnes (XVII.13).

SS. *Gallicanus, John, and Paul* (XVIII): unnamed Christians bury the body of Hilarinus at Ostia (XVIII.8); John, Pigmenius, and Flavian bury the bodies of SS. Crispus, Crispinian, and Benedicta in the house of SS. John and Paul (XVIII App. 4); John and Pigmenius bury Terentianus and his son in the house of John and Paul (XVIII App. 6).

SS. *Processus and Martinianus* (XIX): the matron Lucina recovers the bodies of SS. Processus and Martinianus and buries them on the Via Aurelia (XIX.10).

Pope *Marcellus and companions* (XX): Thrason and John the priest recover and bury the bodies of Saturninus and Sisinnius on the Via Salaria (XX.8); John the priest recovers and buries the bodies of Papias and Maurus on the Via Nomentana (XX.9); John the priest recovers and buries the body of Crescentianus on the Via Salaria (XX.19); John the priest recovers and buries the bodies of Largus, Smaragdus, and Cyriacus on the Via Salaria (XX.20); Pope Marcellus and Lucina raise up their bodies and rebury them on the Via Ostiense (XX.21); John the priest and Lucina recover and bury the body of Pope Marcellus in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria (XX.22).

SS. *Primus and Felicianus* (XXI): unnamed Christians recover and bury the bodies of SS. Primus and Felicianus at *Nomentum* (XXI.7).

SS. *Marius and Martha* (XXII): Marius, Martha, and John the priest collect the bodies of Blastus and many other unnamed Christians and bury them on the Via Salaria Vecchia (XXII.3); Marius, Martha, and Pastor the priest recover the body of Cyrinus from the Tiber and bury it in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense (XXII.4); unnamed Christians bury the bodies of Asterius and others at Ostia (XXII.14); the matron Savinilla recovers and buries the body of St Valentine on the Via Flaminia (XXII.15); the matron Felicitas recovers the bodies of SS. Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc and buries them on the Via Cornelia (XXII.19).

SS. *Marcellinus and Peter* (XXIII): Lucilla and Firmina recover the bodies of SS. Marcellinus and Peter from the 'Dark Woods' and bury them on the Via Labicana (XXIII.12).

The Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV): Nicomedes recovers the bodies of the five 'Crowned Martyrs' and buries them in his house in *Sirmium* (XXIV.21); Pope Miltiades buries the bodies of four 'Crowned Martyrs' on the Via Labicana (XXIV.22).

St *Pancratius* (XXV): the matron Octavilla recovers the body of St Pancratius and buries it on the Via Aurelia (XXV.4).

Pope Stephen I (XXVI): Pope Stephen recovers the body of Nemesius and buries it on the Via Latina (XXVI.11); Pope Stephen recovers the bodies of Symphronius, Olympius, Exuperia, and Theodulus and buries them on the Via Latina (XXVI.13); Tertullinus recovers and buries the bodies of twelve members of Stephen's clergy on the Via Latina (XXVI.14); Pope Stephen recovers the body of Tertullinus and buries it on the Via Latina (XXVI.17); unnamed Christians bury the body of Pope Stephen in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia (XXVI.21); Christians recover and bury the body of Tarsicius in the cemetery of Callistus (XXVI.22).

SS. *Gordianus and Epimachus* (XXVII): unnamed Christians bury the body of Gordianus on the Via Latina (XXVII.5).

The Greek Martyrs (XXVIII): Eusebius the priest recovers and buries the body of Maximus in the cemetery of Callistus (XXVIII.9); Hippolytus recovers the bodies of Eusebius, Marcellus, and Paulina, and buries them on the Via Appia (XXVIII.12); Pope Stephen recovers the bodies of Neon and Maria and buries them on the Via Appia (XXVIII.13); Hippolytus recovers the bodies of Hadrias and his namesake Hippolytus, and buries them on the Via Appia (XXVIII.14).

SS. *Eusebius and Pontianus* (XXIX): Eusebius, Pontianus, Peregrinus, and Vincent recover the body of Julius and bury it in the cemetery of Calepodius (XXIX.4); Rufinus the priest recovers the body of Antonius and buries it in the cemetery of Calepodius (XXIX.10); Rufinus recovers the bodies of Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus and buries them at a place between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis (XXIX.11).

Pope Urban (XXX): Fortunatus recovers the body of Lucianus and buries it in the cemetery of Praetextatus (XXX.18[9]); Fabian, Callistus, and Ammonius bury the body of Pope Urban in the cemetery of Praetextatus (XXX.19[10]); Justinus, Fortunatus, and Marmenia rebury the bodies of Pope Urban and Mamilian in the house of Marmenia on the Via Appia (XXX.22[13]); unnamed Christians bury the bodies of Marmenia and her daughter Lucinia next to the body of Pope Urban (XXX.25[16]); Polycarp the priest buries the body of St Savinus (XXX.26[17]); Polemius the priest buries an unspecified number of martyrs in the crypt where St Caecilia was buried (XXX.27[18]).

SS. *Rufina and Secunda* (XXXI): Plautilla recovers the bodies of Rufina and Secunda, and constructs a mausoleum over them (XXXI.7).

SS. *Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus* (XXXII): unnamed Christians take the body of Cyrinus and bury it in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia (XXXII.14); Severina recovers the bodies of SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus, and buries them on her estate on the Via Nomentana (XXXII.20).

SS. *Calogerus and Parthenius* (XXXIII): Anatolia recovers the bodies of Calogerus and Parthenius and buries them in the crypt of Pope Sixtus II (XXXIII.6).

SS. *Serapia and Sabina* (XXXIV): Sabina recovers the body of Serapia and constructs a tomb in which to house it (XXXIV.12); unnamed Christians take the body of Sabina and bury it in the town of Vindena (XXXIV.15).

SS. *Felix and Adauctus* (XXXV): unnamed Christians bury the bodies of Felix and Adauctus in a gaping hole in the ground off the Via Ostiense (XXXV.2).

SS. *Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix* (XXXVI): Beatrix, together with the priests Crispus and John, recover the bodies of Simplicius and Faustinus and bury them in (the cemetery of Generosa *ad Sextum Philippi*), on the Via Portuense (XXXVI.1); Lucina recovers the body of Beatrix and buries it with those of Simplicius and Faustinus, *ad Sextum Philippi* (XXXVI.2).

St Symphorosa and her seven sons (XXXVII): Eugenius recovers the body of Symphorosa and buries it in Tivoli (XXXVII.4).

St Pigenius (XXXVIII): Dafrosa recovers the body of Faustus (XXXVIII.4); the priest John recovers the body of St Bibiana (XXXVIII.4); Concordia recovers the body of John the priest and buries it (XXXVIII.5); Candida recovers the body of St Pigenius from the Tiber and buries it in the cemetery of Pontianus (XXXVIII.5).

St Getulius (XXXIX): Symphorosa recovers the body of Getulius and buries it on her estate in Sabine territory (XXXIX.8).

It will be seen that, in the minds of the authors of *passiones*, the recovery and burial of martyrs' bodies was an indispensable element of the narrative, for it was the site of the burial which was the focus of pilgrims' interest in these martyrs. At the same time, the authors showed a remarkable lack of originality in thinking up names for the pious Christians who performed this service, so that Lucina and John the priest figure in numerous *passiones*, even when the martyrdoms—judging from the chronology provided by the *passiones* themselves—take place centuries apart. Lucina, for example, who had participated in the burial of SS. Processus and Martinianus during the reign of Nero (54–68), is subsequently involved in the burial of Pope Cornelius (AD 252), in that of St Sebastian during the tetrarchy of Diocletian and Maximian (285–305), and finally in the burial of Pope Marcellus (AD 309–10): a span of

nearly 250 years! But the authors of *passiones* were not bothered by minor chronological discrepancies such as these: for them, the name 'Lucina' was merely a token meaning 'pious Christian matron', and 'John the priest' a token meaning 'pious Christian priest'. The reuse of the names merely indicates that the authors of *passiones* read and borrowed from each other's work.

Divine retribution is visited on the persecutors. In some, but by no means all, *passiones*, the persecuting emperor or magistrate is struck down by divine vengeance following his execution of martyrs. Thus Decius and Valerian, his urban prefect (!), were both struck dead in the Roman amphitheatre, during public games, in the *passio* of SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus (VI.9), and again in the later version of these martyrdoms which passes under the name of St Polychronius (XVI.33); the son of the urban prefect was struck down dead because of his sexual assault on St Agnes (XVII.9); Carpasius the deputy confiscated the house of the saintly Cyriacus and used the baptismal font as a plunge-pool for parties with whores, whereupon he and nineteen other revellers were struck down dead (XX.23); Lampadius the tribune, after having tortured the Four (in fact Five) Crowned Martyrs, was seized by a demon and torn apart while sitting on his tribunal (XXIV.20); after having executed Pope Urban, Carpasius the deputy was seized by a demon and died (XXX.20[11]); after having executed the martyrs Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus, Aurelian, the Master of Foot and Horse, was seized by a sudden demon and died (XXXII.20); while Serapia was being beaten with staves on the orders of the local governor, a splinter from one of the staves lodged in the governor's eye, and three days later he lost the eye (XXXIV.11); having murdered Beatrix, Lucretius was possessed by Satan, and died soon afterwards (XXXVI.2); the emperor Hadrian, having executed St Symphorosa and her seven sons, was possessed by a demon and forced to live underground, but when after a year he emerged into the light of day, he was seized by the demon and died (XXXVII.6). Perhaps the most dramatic example of divine retribution visited on a persecuting emperor is the account of the death of Julian 'the Apostate' in the *passio* of St Pigenius, where we are told that, as a result of his persecution of Pigenius, Julian was captured by the Persians and skinned alive, with his skin being used thereafter as a coverlet for the thrones of Persian kings:⁸¹ 'And thus it came about that he who had wickedly mistreated the bodies of the saints in this temporal life, was punished in body on earth with fitting torment, just as his soul was (punished) in hell' (XXXVIII.6).

⁸¹ The story of Julian's skin being used as a coverlet has been lifted from a story told by Lactantius (*De mortibus persecutorum* [CPL 91], v. 6) concerning the fate of the emperor Valerian, who was captured and executed in Persia in AD 260.

DATING THE LATIN TEXTS

One of the problems which have always bedevilled the study of Roman *passiones martyrum* is that of dating them. Scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were inclined to believe that the texts, or at least some of them, were contemporary with the martyrdoms they described; but as the Bollandists' work of critical hagiography advanced, culminating in the publications of Hippolyte Delehaye, and the absurd chronological errors which infest the *passiones* were laid bare, doubts grew not only about the early dating of the texts, but about their historical value in general. The realization that they were unreliable—indeed false—witnesses to the events they describe led to their almost total neglect by historians of early Christianity. In recent years, however, there has been a welcome revival of interest in the Roman *passiones*, not only by palaeo-Christian archaeologists (for whom they are an indispensable resource), but also by literary and cultural historians. And as a reflex of this revival of interest, there have been important advances in our understanding of the chronology of the texts themselves, notably through the published researches of Cécile Lanéry,⁸² with the result that it is now possible to arrange the texts in an approximate chronological sequence, and to determine which texts belong (roughly) to the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. I stress that the arrangement is only approximate—no text can yet be confidently assigned to a year, or even to a decade—but it is a beginning nevertheless. The texts translated in the present volume are arranged in approximate chronological order.⁸³ In what follows I survey the sorts of evidence which underpin this approximate chronological ordering; the evidence which pertains to a particular *passio* is set out in the introduction which accompanies each text.

The earliest surviving fictional *passio* of a Roman martyr is thought to be that of St Felicitas with her seven sons (I), the reason being that the text is apparently referred to by Arnobius the Younger, who was resident at Rome during the years 430–50, in his *Liber ad Gregoriam*; and since it seems likely that the *passio* was composed on the occasion of the embellishment of the tomb of St Felicitas (in the cemetery of Maximus on the Via Salaria Nuova) by Pope Boniface I (418–22), one may deduce that the *passio* was composed c.420. Two other important *passiones*—those of St Sebastian (III) and St Caecilia (IV)—were composed by the same Arnobius, as Cécile Lanéry has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt: hence, by implication, they were composed during the period 430–50. The *passio* of SS. Anastasia and

⁸² Notably in 'Hagiographie'; but also in her two important studies of the hagiography of Arnobius the Younger: 'Arnohe le Jeune', and 'Nouvelles recherches'.

⁸³ My ordering of texts broadly follows that of Cécile Lanéry ('Hagiographie'), with a few exceptions (noted in the individual introductions to the translations); I have also included a few texts (XXVII, XXXV, XXXVI, and XXXIX) not discussed by Lanéry.

Chrysogonus (II) is laid under contribution at various points by Arnobius in his two *passiones*; it was therefore arguably composed before the period of his scholarly activity in Rome, say, c.425. The *passiones* of St Sebastian and St Caecilia in their turn were hugely influential on later authors of Roman *passiones martyrum*, notably those of Pope Clement (V), Pope Cornelius (VII), SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), St Eugenia (IX), and SS. Chrysanthus and Daria (X), implying in turn that these works date from a period later than Arnobius' hagiographical activity. For various reasons they may be assigned to the second half of the fifth century: wording taken from the *passio* of Pope Clement (V) was reused c.450 by the author of a liturgical *passio* composed for the church of Milan; the *passio* of Pope Cornelius (VII) was arguably composed to coincide with the construction of a basilica dedicated to Cornelius by Pope Leo I (440–61); the pervasive concern with virginity marks the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII) as a work of the fifth century, but its verbal debts to the *passio* of St Sebastian (III) point to the second half of that century; the fact that the two eunuch slave-boys Protus and Hyacinthus in the *passio* of St Eugenia (IX) are evidently modelled on SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), in combination with the fact that the *passio* is alluded to by the poet Alcimus Avitus at the very beginning of the sixth century, marks it as a work of the later fifth; and the wide learning of its author, and its Latin style, mark the *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria (X) as a work of the fifth century. Two further *passiones*—those of St Susanna (XI) and Pope Callistus (XII)—probably belong to the very end of the fifth century: the first of these is indebted at various points to Arnobius' *passio* of St Caecilia, and the second, because it makes no allusion whatsoever to the Laurentian schism (see below), probably dates *ipso facto* from before c.500; both of these *passiones* were laid under contribution by the compiler of the first edition of the *Liber pontificalis*, writing c.530. The first twelve *passiones* translated in the present volume are therefore probably all to be assigned to the fifth century. Together, they provided the models for subsequent hagiographers, and the *passiones* composed during the sixth century are all marked by their debts to those of the fifth.

Next in the chronological sequence come four texts which were evidently composed at the very beginning of the sixth century, during the campaign of pamphleteering which accompanied the so-called 'Laurentian schism', which convulsed the Church during the years 498–506. When Symmachus (498–514) was elected to the papacy with the support of the emperor Theoderic, a group of Roman senators refused to endorse the election, and preferred instead a local candidate named Laurence. The resulting schism was a violent affair which was settled only in 506, and which resulted in the deaths of a number of Roman clergy. The authors of four *passiones* adumbrated the Laurentian schism in various ways: that of Eusebius the priest (XIII) expressed his partisan support for Laurence by configuring the conflict between

Symmachus and Laurence in terms of an earlier papal conflict of similar intensity between Pope Liberius (352–66) and the antipope Felix II (355–65); the same reconfiguration animates the *passio* of Pope Felix II (XIV), which was very probably composed by the author of the *passio* of Eusebius the priest. Another aspect of the Laurentian schism is reflected in the *passio* of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV), namely concern with the legitimate process of the establishment and control of *titulus*-churches: the antipope Laurence, who as Caelius Laurentius attended the synod of 499 and signed as *archipresbyter* of the church of St Praxedis (S. Prassede on the Esquiline) was evidently concerned with the freedom from papal control of his own church and that of the associated church of S. Pudenziana. Finally, the *passio* of SS. Polychronius and others (XVI), including SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus, is an ambitious reworking of the earlier *passio vetus* of these same saints (VI); in particular the saint Polychronius was taken from the *Gesta de Xysti purgatione et Polychronii accusatione*, one of the notable pamphlets produced during the Laurentian schism. The schism therefore provides a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *passio* of Polychronius, which presumably therefore was composed before the death of Pope Symmachus (514). It is likely that the *passio* of St Agnes (XVII) was composed at roughly the same time, probably by a cleric of S. Agnese, at the time the church was being extensively refurbished by the same Pope Symmachus, hence before 514.

Various evidence allows us to date other *passiones* approximately to the sixth century. The original *passio* of SS. Gallicanus, John, and Paul (XVIII) was later redacted so as to emphasize the importance of the (fifth-century) church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelian (XVIII, Appendix); given that the redaction is preserved in a manuscript dating from c.600, the implication is that the original *passio* is a sixth-century composition. The author of the *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus drew on the pseudo-Linus Acts of St Peter, an *apocryphon* which can be securely dated to the earlier sixth century, and probably to the years of the Laurentian schism. And it seems very likely that, in his turn, the author of the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX) drew on the *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus; but since the *passio* of Pope Marcellus was in its turn laid under contribution by the compiler of the second edition of the *Liber pontificalis*, writing c.550, the *passio* of Pope Marcellus may be assigned to the first half of the sixth century.

From the mid-sixth century onwards, however, the chronology of the *passiones* is less secure, and different kinds of dating evidence come into play: whether a *passio* can be associated with the construction or embellishment of an intra-urban or suburban church; whether martyrs' relics were removed from suburban cemeteries to the safety of intra-urban shrines in the face of invasions from external enemies; whether the description of the site of a martyr's burial in one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries reveals a debt to a *passio*; and so on. Of primary importance are the debts which these later

(post-550) *passiones* reveal to earlier (pre-550) *passiones*. Some examples: the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII) is indebted in many ways to the earlier *passio* of St Polychronius and others (XVI); the *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII) may have been composed before or during the Gothic wars (537–60), but before the translation of the saints' relics to an intra-urban church at the end of the sixth century; the *passio* of St Pancratius (XXV) may have been composed at the time of the construction of the church of S. Pancrazio by Pope Symmachus (498–514), but may also be a reflex of the extensive remodelling of that church by Pope Honorius (625–38); the *passio* of Pope Stephen (XXVI) reveals debts to the *passiones* of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV), Polychronius and others (XVI) and Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII), but was drawn on in turn by the author of the *passio* of the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII), which must have been in existence at the time the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' was compiled in the mid- to late seventh century; and the author of the *passio* of Pope Urban (XXX) derived the character of Turcius Almachius from Arnobius' *passio* of St Caecilia (IV), and that of Carpasius from the *passio* of Pope Marcellus.

The present collection includes a number of *passiones* which were composed by clerics living outside of Rome, and whose texts are eccentric in comparison with the *passiones* composed by clerics resident in Rome, and, because they therefore show few verbal debts to genuinely Roman *passiones*, are extremely difficult to date. For example, the *passio* of SS. Primus and Felicianus (XXI) was apparently composed by a cleric of *Nomentum* (modern Mentana) some thirteen miles from Rome, but was obviously in existence, and had been transmitted to Rome, at the time the saints' relics were translated to the church of S. Stefano Rotondo on the Caelian by Pope Theodore (642–9); the *passio* of the Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV) was originally composed by a cleric somewhere in Pannonia, where the saints were martyred, but was subsequently redacted at Rome, probably as a result of the prestige of the sixth-century church of SS. Quattro Coronati on the Caelian; the *passio* of SS. Rufina and Secunda (XXXI) was apparently composed by a cleric of Silva Candida, the diocese in which the church of S. Rufina was located, at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia, possibly in the seventh century; the *passio* of SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (XXXII) was composed at some time in the mid-seventh century by a cleric of the church of these same saints, at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, since the notice of their shrine in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' is obviously dependent on the *passio*; that of SS. Serapia and Sabina (XXXIV) appears to be the work of a cleric living somewhere in Umbria, perhaps Terni; and the *passio* of St Getulius (XXXIX), who was martyred at Ponte Sfondato, some twenty-nine miles from Rome on the Via Salaria, may have been composed by a monk of the nearby monastery of Farfa, perhaps in the early eighth century. If this dating is correct, the *passio* of St Getulius is the latest of the *passiones* translated in the present volume.

The remaining *passiones* (XXXIII–XL) are all highly derivative, and are based extensively on earlier *passiones*: that of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius, two eunuch brothers, is based on the earlier *passiones* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII) and SS. Gallicanus, John, and Paul (XVIII); that of St Symphorosa and her seven sons is closely modelled on that of St Felicitas and her seven sons (I); that of St Pigmenius (XXXVIII) is a sort of appendix to the earlier *passio* of SS. Gallicanus, John, and Paul (XVIII), since it draws all of its characters from the earlier work. All these later *passiones* probably belong to the seventh century.

In sum: the earliest of the *passiones* translated here (I and II) were probably composed in the earlier fifth century, arguably during the 420s. They were followed by the two *passiones* composed by Arnobius the Younger (III and IV) during the approximate period 430–50. Various evidence suggests that eight further *passiones* can be assigned to the second half of the fifth century (V–XII). Then follow five *passiones* dating from the period of the Laurentian schism in the early sixth century (nos. XIII–XVII), followed in turn by several (XVIII–XX, and possibly XXIII) which were apparently composed in the mid-sixth century. The remaining *passiones* (XXI–XXII, XXIV–XL) are derivative of those which had been composed by the mid-sixth century, and date approximately from the later sixth or seventh century, with one (XXXIX) possibly having been composed as late as the first half of the eighth century. The dating of the earlier *passiones* (I–XX) to the period before c.550 is relatively secure; for those composed after that date (XXI–XL), more precise dating criteria remain to be established.

THE LATIN TEXTS

With very few minor exceptions,⁸⁴ the Latin *passiones* translated in this volume are preserved in large numbers of medieval manuscripts, typically between fifty and a hundred, and in some cases, in even larger numbers of manuscripts: the *passio* of St Agnes (XVII) in more than 450, the *passio* of St Sebastian (III) in more than 500. These numbers indicate that the *passiones* of Roman martyrs enjoyed a vast readership during the Middle Ages; but a corollary of the very large numbers of surviving manuscripts is that, with the exception of one text preserved in a single manuscript (St Pigmenius: no. XXXVIII), no edition of a *passio* has ever been based on full collation of all the surviving manuscript evidence: the *passiones* are typically read in editions based on, at most, a handful of manuscript witnesses, and often on only one or two of these. In fact, of the forty *passiones* translated here, only one—the

⁸⁴ One redaction of the *passio* of St Pancratius (XXV) is not preserved in any manuscript, and is known only through the printed edition of Mombritus. The *passio* of St Pigmenius (XXXVIII) is preserved in a single manuscript.

passio of SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus (II)—can be read in a critical edition: and in this case, the edition of Paola Moretti is based on full collation of roughly a quarter (fifty-five) of the more than 200 surviving witnesses. In a majority of cases, the *passio* is available only in an edition printed in earlier centuries, from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth.

The earliest editions still in use are those by the Humanist scholar Bonino Mombrizio of Milan (1424–c.1480).⁸⁵ (His name is Latinized as Mombritus.) Although he was known in his day for a substantial number of editions of classical authors, his great contribution to hagiography was his *Sanctuarium seu Vitae sanctorum*, printed at Milan in 1478,⁸⁶ but the work is now cited from an edition made in 1910 by the monks of Solesmes. This huge work includes 334 *passiones* and *vitae* of saints; some of them are drawn from late medieval compilations such as the *Legenda aurea* of Iacopo da Varazze and the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais. But the *Sanctuarium* also includes a number of cases (some 183) where the source is unknown, and is thought to have been a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century legendary of north Italian origin.⁸⁷ These unsourced texts include eleven *passiones* translated in the present volume, which must still be consulted in the edition of Mombritus.⁸⁸

A century later, between 1570 and 1575, Lorenz Sauer (1522–78), a monk of the Carthusian house of St Barbara in Cologne, published his huge *De probatis sanctorum historiis*.⁸⁹ (His name is Latinized as Surius.) Sauer had the habit of rewriting the *passiones* and *vitae* which he edited in order to conform to his

⁸⁵ See the important entry in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, ed. A. M. Ghisalberti (Rome, 1960–, in progress) 75 (2011), pp. 471–5 [S. Spanò Martinelli], as well as S. Spanò Martinelli, ‘Bonino Mombrizio e gli albori della scienza agiografica’, in *Erudizione e devozione: le raccolte di vite di santi in età moderna e contemporanea*, ed. G. Luongo (Rome, 2000), pp. 3–18.

⁸⁶ The edition is listed in L. Hain, *Repertorium Bibliographicum*, 2 vols. in 4 (Stuttgart, 1826), nos. *3315, 6716, 8541, *11544, 12378, 12500, *13354, *14873–14875, and 14990. For the date of publication, see T. Foffano, ‘Per la data dell’edizione dell’“Sanctuarium” di Bonino Mombrizio’, *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 22 (1979), 509–11.

⁸⁷ See G. Eis, *Die Quellen für das Sanctuarium des Mailänder Humanisten Boninus Mombritus: eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der großen Legendensammlung des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1933), with the review by Hippolyte Delehaye in *AB* 53 (1935), 412–22, as well as B. de Gaiffier, ‘Au sujet des sources du *Sanctuarium* de Mombritus’, *Mittelateinisches Jahrbuch* 14 (1979), 278–81.

⁸⁸ Mombritus is a principal or important source for the following *passiones*: Pope Clement (V); Pope Cornelius (VII), Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus (IX), Chrysanthus and Daria (X), Susanna (XI), Eusebius the priest (XIII), Pope Felix II (XIV), Gallicanus, John, and Paul (XVIII), Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI), Symphorosa (XXXVII), and Basilides (XL).

⁸⁹ *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, 6 vols. (Cologne, 1570–5). On Sauer and his collection, see *DACL* XV/2, cols. 1736–7 [H. Leclercq]; P. Holt, ‘Die Sammlung von Heiligenleben des Laurentius Surius’, *Neues Archiv* 44 (1922), 341–64; S. Spanò Martinelli, ‘Cultura antica, polemica antiprotestante, erudizione sacra nel *De probatis sanctorum historiis* di Lorenzo Surio’, in *Raccolte di Vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo*, ed. S. Boesch Gajano (Fasano di Brindisi, 1990), pp. 131–41; and esp. R. Godding, ‘L’oeuvre hagiographique d’Héribert Rosweyde’, in *De Rosweyde aux “Acta Sanctorum”*. *La recherche hagiographique des Bollandistes à travers quatre siècles*, ed.

own sense of style, with the result that his editions must be used with great caution. Fortunately, there is only one *passio* translated in the present volume for which we are solely dependent on a text published by Surius.⁹⁰

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and later, large numbers of *passiones* of Roman martyrs were published by various Bollandists in the monumental series of *Acta Sanctorum*.⁹¹ As with all scholarly enterprises conducted on such a huge scale over several centuries, the quality of the editions varies substantially: some are merely serviceable, but some are excellent, including those produced by Jean Bolland himself (1596–1665), Daniel Papebroch (1628–1714), and, in more recent times, by Hippolyte Delehaye (1859–1941).⁹² Twenty of the *passiones* translated in the present volume are available only, or principally, in the *Acta Sanctorum*.⁹³

A few editions were produced during the nineteenth century by distinguished classical and patristic scholars.⁹⁴ Several *passiones* were edited to a high standard in the early twentieth century by the great Bollandist, Hippolyte Delehaye, and published outside the pages of *Acta SS*.⁹⁵ One text was edited by Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri (1869–1960), one of the leading interpreters of

R. Godding, B. Joassart, X. Lequeux and F. De Vriendt, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 88 (Brussels 2009), pp. 35–62, at 36.

⁹⁰ The one *passio* translated here which is available only in the edition of Surius, is that of SS. Felix and Adauctus (XXXV).

⁹¹ *Acta Sanctorum quotquot in orbe coluntur*, 68 vols. (Antwerp, Tongerlo, and Brussels, 1643–1925), treating saints whose feast-days fall between 1 January and 10 November. A second edition of *Acta SS*, printed at Venice (1734–60), consisting of 44 vols. extending as far as *Septembris V* [1755], is rare and rarely cited. A third edition, printed at Paris (1863–70), consists of 57 vols. extending to *Octobris X* [1861], is widely available, particularly in North American libraries, and is widely cited. Reference should always be made to the first edition: texts reprinted in the third edition incorporate large numbers of typographical errors which ought to have been corrected by careful proofreading. The same is true, a fortiori, of the electronic version of *Acta SS*, published by Chadwyck-Healey (1999): although this version is said to be based on the first edition, the re-keyboarding of the Latin texts introduced so many uncorrected errors that the electronic versions of the texts simply cannot be cited with confidence.

⁹² There is an excellent overview of the Bollandists' enterprise in R. Godding et al., *Bollandistes: Saints et légendes. Quatre siècles de recherche* (Brussels, 2007).

⁹³ The *passiones* edited by the Bollandists in *Acta SS* include the following: Sebastian (III), Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), Pope Callistus (XII), Pudenciana and Praxedis (XV), Agnes and Emerentiana (XVII), Pope Marcellus (XX), Primus and Felicianus (XXI), Marius and Martha (XXII), Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII), Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV), Pope Stephen (XXVI), Gordianus and Epimachus (XXVII), the 'Greek Martyrs' (XXVIII), Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX), Rufina and Secunda (XXXI), Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (XXXII), Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII), Serapia and Sabina (XXXIV), Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI), and Getulius (XXXIX).

⁹⁴ Notably those of Paul de Lagarde, the *passio vetus* of SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus (VI); of Karl Kunstle, St Felicitas and her seven sons (I); of C. Narbey, Pope Clement (V); and of Wilhelm Wattenbach, who published two separate editions of the *passio* of the Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV).

⁹⁵ Delehaye's editions published outside *Acta SS* include three in his *Étude sur le légendier romain* (Anastasia and Chrysogonus (II), Caecilia (IV), and Pigenius (XXXVIII)), and one in *AB* (Polychronius and others (XVI)).

Roman *passiones*.⁹⁶ Later in the twentieth century, M. G. Mara edited one of the *passiones* translated here (XXXIX), and G. N. Verrando produced editions of two texts based on his collation of numerous manuscripts (VI and XIV).⁹⁷ But with the exception of the edition of the above-mentioned *passio* of SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus (II) by Paola Moretti, none of these could remotely be described as a critical edition.

THE TRANSLATIONS

The translations in the present volume are arranged in approximate chronological order, as that has been established by the important research of Cécile Lanéry. The translations are intended primarily to facilitate consultation of the Latin texts, so that, as far as possible, a sentence of English translation corresponds to a Latin sentence (this is obviously not possible in the case of texts printed by Mombritius, who reproduced the medieval punctuation of his exemplar(s), as was the normal practice in fifteenth-century editions). For the same reason, the translations are closely literal; words supplied in English for the sake of coherence are sequestered by parentheses (), and essential information not present in the original is supplied in square brackets []. When I have departed from the published texts, I have noted the departures in footnotes.

⁹⁶ The *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX).

⁹⁷ Mara edited the *passio* of St Getulius (XXXIX); Verrando's editions include the *passio vetus* of SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus (VI), and that of Pope Felix II (XIV). Verrando was an archaeologist who inter alia made notable contributions to our knowledge of martyrial shrines on the Via Aurelia; but he was not a trained philologist, and in spite of his diligence in collating manuscripts, his two published editions are worthless.

Texts and Commentaries

I

St Felicitas and Her Seven Sons

c.420; relevant to the cemeteries of Priscilla (Via Salaria Nuova), of the *Iordani* (Via Salaria Nuova), of Maximus (Via Salaria Nuova), and of Praetextatus (Via Appia)

According to the present *passio*,¹ St Felicitas was an aristocratic Roman widow of senatorial rank who was tried and executed for her Christianity, along with her seven sons, during the principate of ‘Antoninus’.² It is arguably one of the earliest surviving *passiones* of Roman martyrs, and in spite of its schematic and repetitive format, its influence may be seen in later examples of the genre.

The *passio* is brief and its narrative simple. At the prompting of pagan priests, who feared that through her public display of Christian behaviour Felicitas was undermining belief in the traditional Roman gods, she was arrested and tried by the urban prefect Publius (c. 1). At the trial she was accompanied by her seven sons (c. 2). After Felicitas had refused to sacrifice and had been beaten up, her first four sons (Ianuarius, Felix, Philip, and Silvanus) were interrogated by the prefect, and vigorously refused to renounce their Christian belief (c. 3). Then the remaining three sons were interrogated, and they were similarly recalcitrant (c. 4). Antoninus therefore dispatched them to various executioners so that they could be tortured, with the result that all of them—the mother and the seven sons—were executed by various means (c. 5).

The martyrdom of St Felicitas is not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* of 354 (Appendix I, below), but is commemorated against 23 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: ‘<Likewise> in Rome, in the cemetery of

¹ Listed *BHL* 2853 and *CPL* 2187; for studies of the text, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 223–4; *DACL* V/1, cols. 1259–98 [H. Leclercq]; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendaire romain*, pp. 116–23; *BSS* V, cols. 605–8 [F. Caraffa]; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 35–45; and the works by Joseph Führer and Karl Künstle mentioned below (n. 18).

² The text names the emperor in question simply as *Antoninus*. This name could in principle apply equally to Antoninus Pius (138–61), Antoninus Caracalla (211–17), Antoninus Geta (211–12), or Antoninus Elagabalus (218–22). But since only the first of these was known as Antoninus (with the epithet ‘Pius’), and the last three were usually known by other names (Caracalla, Geta, and Elagabalus respectively), I proceed on the assumption that the emperor intended here is Antoninus Pius; but this is merely an assumption.

Maximus, Felicitas' (Appendix III, p. 657); she is commemorated on the same date, in the Verona, Gelasian, and Gregorian sacramentaries (see Appendix V (b), (c) and (d), pp. 669, 670, 672). From one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum urbis Romae*, we learn further that the crypt of St Felicitas was located above ground (or: on the upper level (*sursum*)) at the cemetery of Maximus on the Via Salaria Nuova (Appendix IV (a) [§3], p. 660); and on the basis of this information, it was possible for de Rossi to identify the cemetery of Maximus, and especially the crypt of St Felicitas, in the grounds of the Villa Savoia in 1856.³

Unlike the mother, however, who is not commemorated in the *Depositio martyrum*, the seven sons are commemorated in that source against 10 July, as follows: 'Felix and Philip, in the cemetery of Priscilla;⁴ and in the cemetery of the Giordani (*Iordani*),⁵ Martial, Vitalis and Alexander; and in the cemetery of Maximus,⁶ Sil(v)anus; and in the cemetery of Praetextatus,⁷ Ianuarius'

³ On the discovery in 1856 of the cemetery of Maximus, and the inscription which permitted identification of the crypt as that of St Felicitas, see de Rossi, 'Scoperta d'una cripta storica', with pls. IX–X (reproduction of the fresco in the crypt showing Felicitas and her seven sons) and XI–XII (de Rossi's reconstruction of the original); see also Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 244–8 (with illustration of the inscription and the fragmentary remains of the fresco on p. 245). On the cemetery of Maximus, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 427–39; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 250–1; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 37–9; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 121–3; F. Bisconti, 'Maximi coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, IV, pp. 60–1; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 39–48.

⁴ On the cemetery of Priscilla and its saints, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 461–558; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 254–60; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 46–50; Tolotti, *Il cimitero di Priscilla*, esp. pp. 107–34 and 316–21 (the burials of Felix and Philip in the so-called 'basilica of Pope Silvester'); Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 130–7; R. Giuliani, 'Priscillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 262–9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 59, with discussion of SS. Felix and Philip at pp. 59–60.

⁵ On the cemetery of the Giordani (*Iordani*), see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 453–61; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 252–4; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 41–6; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 125–8; P. De Santis, 'Iordanorum coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 89–93, with fig. 89, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 57–8.

⁶ On the cemetery of Maximus, see n. 3.

⁷ On the cemetery of Praetextatus, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 282–99; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 214–16; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 99–102; Tolotti, 'Ricerca dei luoghi venerati'; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–92; Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia; eadem, 'Praetextati coemeterium'*, *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 250–61; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–8. The crypt containing the remains of St Ianuarius was identified by de Rossi by means of an inscription in Filocalian lettering bearing the legend 'BEATISSIMO MARTYRI IANVARIO DAMASVS EPISCOPVS FECIT' (see Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 151–2 [no. 24]; *ICUR* V, no. 13871; Ferrua and Carletti, *Damaso e i martiri di Roma*, pp. 35–6 [no. 9]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 125–6; and Appendix II (h), p. 642). This crypt, described as the *cubiculum quadratum*, is designated Ax by archaeologists; the tomb of St Ianuarius is probably to be identified as the 'tomb of the porphyry columns' (Ag') within the crypt: see Tolotti, 'Ricerca dei luoghi venerati', pp. 8–10, 44–8, and 55–7, with pl. III; and Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*, pp. 198–9, with fig. 181 (the general location of the tomb of St Ianuarius identified by the aforementioned inscription in Filocalian lettering) and 311–15.

(Appendix I, below, pp. 634–5).⁸ The alleged relationship between the seven martyrs of 10 July and Felicitas (23 November) is obviously suspicious, but was seemingly clarified by the discovery, in December 1966, in the cemetery of the Giordani (Via Salaria Nuova), of a fragmentary inscription in Filocalian lettering (hence associable with Pope Damasus), apparently referring to the seventh son (the surviving pieces of the inscription do not, alas, include the name of the brother): ‘The seventh of the group of brothers... / wished to bury his remains here, the holy martyr, / because he knew that the halls of heaven had long been prepared for him.’⁹ Given the location of the fragments, the ‘seventh brother’ must have been one of Martial, Vitalis, or Alexander. The fragmentary epigram thus takes its place alongside other Damasan epigrams commemorating the alleged sons of St Felicitas (Appendix II (h), on St Ianuarius, and II (p), on SS. Felix and Philip).¹⁰ The epigram thus appears to offer proof that the story of St Felicitas and her seven sons was already current in the late fourth century, during the pontificate of Damasus (366–84).¹¹

But whether the fragmentary inscription also offers proof that the present *passio* dates from the pontificate of Damasus is more doubtful. In favour of a relatively early dating—to, say, the early fifth century—is the fact that the work was known to Arnobius the Younger, who referred to it in his *Liber ad*

⁸ These burials are also recorded in all three seventh-century itineraries translated below, Appendix IV (a), (b) and (c). Gregory the Great, in his *Dialogi* (iv. 56. 1), mentions that there was a church dedicated to a ‘St Ianuarius’ near the Porta Laurentii (‘ecclesia beati Ianuarii martyris iuxta portam Laurentii’), by which he means the Porta Tiburtina (which by the sixth century had become known as Porta Laurentii because of the basilica of St Laurence, which was located just outside the gate (*fuori le mura*)). The identity of the St Ianuarius in question is unknown, and the site of Gregory’s church has never been identified (S. Serra, ‘Ianuarii (beati) ecclesia’, *LTUR. Suburbium*, III, pp. 83–4). It is highly unlikely that the Ianuarius in question was the bishop of Benevento who was buried in catacombs just outside Naples (S. Gennaro); but possibly he was identical with the present St Ianuarius, buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus.

⁹ A. Ferrua, ‘S. Felicità e i suoi figli’, *La civiltà cattolica* 118/2 (1967), 248–51, and (briefly), Fasola, ‘Le recenti scoperte’, pp. 289–91. The inscription is ed. *ICUR* IX, no. 24310, and by Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 159–60. The Latin text of the inscription reads: ‘SEPTIMVS EX NVMERO FRATRUM... / HIC VOLVIT SANCTVS MARTYR SVA CONDere membra / ATRIA quod CAELI SCIRET SIBI LONGa parata’. For the missing words at the end of the first hexameter, Ferrua conjectured CVI NOMEN ALEXAS (implying that the inscription pertained to the martyr Alexander); but this conjecture is doubtful—the name Alexas is not equivalent to Alexander—and, as Ferrua admitted, given Damasus’ vacuous diction, the hexameter might just as well have concluded with a bland formula (Ferrua suggested COGNOSCERE DEBES (p. 251, n. 6), which, however, is ungrammatical, if SEPTIMVS is supposed to be the object of COGNOSCERE).

¹⁰ Note, however, that neither of these Damasan epigrams makes any mention of Felicitas, or of the fact that the martyrs were brothers.

¹¹ Ferrua’s conclusions are fully discussed by Février and Guyon, ‘*Septimus ex numero fratrum*’, pp. 375–402, who suggest that the inscription more likely referred to either Vitalis or Martial; and cf. the discussion of Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 42–8.

Gregoriam [CPL 241],¹² composed between roughly 430 and 450, as did Peter Chrysologus in one of his sermons [CPL 227], composed c.450.¹³ It was also known a century and a half later to Gregory the Great.¹⁴ Earlier than these witnesses, however, is an epigram, in Damasan style but not by Damasus himself,¹⁵ which was arguably composed when Pope Boniface I (418–22) embellished the tomb of St Felicitas:

The fearful day arrived; she arose against the Enemy.
 When she hastened to conquer the wicked weapons of evil,
 her faith alone, which the Almighty directs, was able
 to overcome the executioner's thousand ways of inflicting injury.
 Freed from bodily evils, endowed with Christ as her guide,
 the kindly parent seeks the lofty halls of heaven.
 She follows her guiltless sons through lovely meadows:
 a garland of flowers binds the temples of this conquering woman.
 The heavenly kingdom receives her bloodied soul;
 this tomb covers her limbs, drenched with her own gore.
 If you seek a label, she reveals her distinction in her name:
 so I wouldn't be overwhelmed <by my sins>, this (woman) was my <guide>.¹⁶

The *Liber pontificalis* records that Pope Boniface I 'built an oratory in the cemetery of St Felicitas, next to her body, and adorned the tomb of St Felicitas and St Silvanus [her son]'.¹⁷ The epigram was presumably composed to adorn this oratory, and was inscribed somewhere within it: it provides evidence that Felicitas was thought to have been martyred together with her sons (lines 7–8), perhaps implying that the story as told in the *passio* was already current by c.420. The dedication of the oratory would provide a fitting occasion for the composition of the present *Passio S. Felicitatis* as well.

The *Depositio martyrum* gives no indication that the seven martyrs of 10 July were brothers, and none whatsoever that they were sons of Felicitas, who is not named in the *Depositio martyrum* and who, according to *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, was commemorated on an entirely different day

¹² *Liber ad Gregoriam*, c. 5 (CCSL XXV A, p. 200); Arnobius here stresses the similarities between the Maccabaeian mother and St Felicitas, implying that he was familiar with the present *passio*.

¹³ *Serm. cxxxiv, De sancta Felicitate* (CCSL XXIV B, pp. 818–19).

¹⁴ *Hom. .xl. in Euang.* iii. 3 (CCSL CXLI, pp. 21–3).

¹⁵ The poem is largely confected from phrases lifted from Damasus: e.g. *vias . . . mille nocendi* (line 3), *amoena virecta* (line 7), *caelestia regna* (line 9); etc. (some of course are also Vergilian).

¹⁶ ICL 8264; Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 252–3 [no. 72]. As transmitted, the final line is corrupt and incomplete. With de Rossi I read *opprimerer* (for *opprimeret*) in the final line, and supply *uitiis dux*, so that the line, as restored, reads: 'ne opprimerer uitiis dux fuit ista mihi' (so translated). The poem is preserved in three *syllogae*: in that of Saint-Riquier (*ICUR* II, p. 88 [no. 33]), in the Fourth Lorsch *sylloge* (*ibid.* p. 116 [no. 92]), and in that of Verdun (*ibid.* p. 136 [no. 13]).

¹⁷ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 93; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 228; trans. Davis, p. 35.

(23 November). How, then, did the author of the *passio* come to associate the seven martyrs of 10 July with a female martyr of 23 November? In the late nineteenth century it was suggested by Joseph Führer that the association was prompted by the biblical story of the (unnamed) Maccabaeian mother and her seven (unnamed) sons, whose refusal to eat pork led to their torture and execution by the cruel king Antiochus (II Macc. 7: 1–42).¹⁸ Various verbal reminiscences indicate that the author of the *passio* did indeed have the Maccabaeian story in mind when composing his account of St Felicitas.¹⁹ In any event, the *passio* of St Felicitas is a work of pure fiction,²⁰ fabricated, on the model of a well-known biblical story, from references to seven martyrs in the *Depositio martyrum* in combination with the name of a female saint.

Text. The *passio* of St Felicitas is preserved in a large number of manuscripts²¹ representing several recensions,²² of which the earliest—*BHL* 2853—is that translated here. There are three editions of *BHL* 2853: that by Mombricitus (I, p. 549), which omits cc. 3–4; that by the Bollandists in the *Acta SS., Iulii* III [1723], pp. 12–13; and that by Karl Künstle.²³ The following translation is based principally on the edition of Künstle, with the chapter numbering (and occasional readings) from that of the Bollandists.

1. In the days of the emperor Antoninus,²⁴ malevolence arose among the high priests (of the pagans); and Felicitas, a woman of senatorial rank

¹⁸ J. Führer, *Ein Beitrag zur Lösung der Felicitas-Frage*, esp. pp. 47–53. Führer's arguments were contested a few years later by Karl Künstle, *Hagiographische Studien*, pp. 84–8; but in more recent times, the debt to II Macc. has been recognized and stressed by Consolino, 'Modelli di santità femminile', pp. 86–8, and by E. Zocca, 'Il modello dei sette fratelli "Maccabei" nella più antica agiografia latina', *Sanctorum* 4 (2007), 101–28.

¹⁹ With the words of Felicitas in the *passio*— 'Look, my sons, at the heavens, and direct your gaze upwards' (c. 2)— cf. the mother's words in II Macc. 7: 28: 'I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them; and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also.'

²⁰ It is described by Ferrua ('S. Felicità e i suoi figli', *Civiltà cattolica* 118/2 (1967), 248–51, at 249) as 'una composizione di pura fantasia'.

²¹ *BHLms* lists some 115 manuscripts, to which Lanéry ('Hagiographie', pp. 40–1, n. 56) added a further forty.

²² On the various recensions and their relationship, see Philippart, 'Grégoire le Grand', esp. pp. 269–81 ('Grégoire, lecteur de la *Passio Felicitatis*'); and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 43–5.

²³ Künstle, *Hagiographische Studien*, pp. 60–3, followed by a useful *index verborum* (pp. 64–8) and detailed commentary (pp. 68–77). Künstle's edition is based on four manuscripts, of which one—Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 32, datable to the second quarter of the ninth century (Bischoff, *Katalog*, I, no. 1594)— is the earliest surviving witness to this text; Künstle provides a full description of the manuscript at pp. 14–44.

²⁴ Presumably the reference is to Antoninus Pius (emperor, 138–61); see n. 2. For the principate of Antoninus Pius, see *SHA*, 'Antoninus Pius', which is probably based on the (lost) *Vitae Caesarum* of Marius Maximus, and is thought to be largely trustworthy. Antoninus Pius is not known to history as a persecutor of Christians, and on at least one occasion wrote to the Greek cities to forbid violent measures against Christians (see Barnes, *Tertullian*, p. 154); but Justin Martyr, in his *Second Apology*, describes the trial and execution before Urbicus, the urban prefect, of three Christians. Q. Lollius Urbicus was urban prefect in the years c.150 (see Vitucci,

(*inlustris*),²⁵ together with her seven thoroughly Christian sons, was arrested. While remaining a widow, she had dedicated her chastity to God. And, devoting herself to prayer by day and night, she provided bountiful instruction for chaste minds from her own experience. The high priests, observing that through her (efforts) awareness of the name of Christ was advancing, accused her before the emperor Antoninus, saying: 'This widowed woman with her sons is insulting our gods to the detriment of our well-being. If she will not venerate the gods, your Excellency should realize that our gods will be so angered that they will not be able to be appeased in any way.'²⁶ Then the emperor Antoninus charged the urban prefect Publius²⁷ to compel her and her children to mitigate the anger of their [the Romans'] gods by sacrificing. And so Publius, the urban prefect, ordered her to be brought to him in private; and, urging her in gentle tones to sacrifice, he (nevertheless) threatened death by way of punishment. Felicitas said to him: 'I cannot be persuaded by your blandishments, nor broken by your threats. For I have the Holy Spirit (within me), Who will not allow me to be overcome by the devil. Therefore I am convinced that I shall overcome you while I am still alive; and if I am killed, I shall overcome you better when dead.'²⁸ Publius said: 'You wretch, if it is pleasant for you to die, at least let your sons live.' Felicitas replied: 'My sons (will) live if they have not sacrificed to idols; but if they have committed so great a sin, they will go to eternal perdition.'

2. On another day Publius was sitting (in tribunal) in the forum of Mars,²⁹ and he ordered her to be brought (before him) with her children. And he said

Ricerche sulla Praefectura urbi, p. 117) and his executions therefore fell during the principate of Antoninus Pius (indeed, he is the addressee of the *Second Apology*). In any event, trials of Christians were conducted by magistrates of various rank and title, and in such trials the attitude of the emperor may have been relatively unimportant (cf. Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 151: 'the genuine evidence points to the relative unimportance of the emperor's attitude').

²⁵ On the rank of *illustris*, the most distinguished of the senatorial classes, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9. As a member of this class, Felicitas ought in legal principle to have been relegated rather than executed (see Introduction, p. 26); but an urban prefect had the freedom to prescribe whatever punishment he wished.

²⁶ As Lanéry observes ('Hagiographie', p. 40, n. 53), the motif of the sedition of the high priests is first found in biblical Acts, and becomes thereafter a motif in *passiones* of martyrs: cf. those of Pope Clement (V.4) and SS. Agnes and Emerentiana (XVII.11).

²⁷ There is no evidence for an urban prefect named 'Publius' during the principate of Antoninus Pius (see Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 231–3, and Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla Praefectura urbi*, pp. 117–18); in any case, as Delehaye observed, the name 'Publius' is so common that no significance could be attached to its occurrence here (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 120).

²⁸ This wording is possibly indebted to Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, c. 50.3: 'Sed occidimur.—Certe, cum obtinuimus. Ergo uincimus, cum occidimur, denique euadimus, cum obducimur' (CCSL I, p. 169).

²⁹ The 'forum of Mars' is another name for the famous forum of Augustus (see G. De Spirito, 'Forum Martis', *LTUR* II, p. 307), which acquired the epithet 'of Mars' because its principal monument was a huge temple of Mars Ultor. The temple was flanked by porticoes on either side, which were venues for courts of justice, especially for public prosecutors; see Vigneaux, *Essai sur*

to her: 'Have pity on your sons, (who are) good young men and flourishing in the flower of their early youth.' Felicitas replied: 'Your compassion is wickedness, and your urgings are cruelty.' And turning to her sons she said: 'Look, my sons, at the heavens, and direct your gaze upwards.³⁰ Christ with His saints awaits you there. Fight on behalf of your souls, and show yourselves to be faithful in the love of Christ.' Hearing this, Publius ordered her to be beaten with fists, saying: 'Have you dared to issue these warnings (to your children) in my presence, so that they will scorn the decrees of our emperors?'

3. Then he summons her first son, named Ianuarius, and was promising him endless good things, and he (also) warned him of the pains of a whipping if he refused to sacrifice to the idols. Ianuarius replied: 'You counsel foolishness. The wisdom of the Lord preserves me, and shall make me overcome all these things.' The judge [i.e. Publius the urban prefect sitting in tribunal] immediately ordered him to be lashed with switches and to be consigned to prison. He then ordered her second son Felix to be brought in. When Publius had urged him to sacrifice to the idols, he said firmly: 'There is one God, Whom we worship, to Whom we offer the sacrifice of sacred devotion. See to it that you do not believe that I, or any of my brothers, will withdraw from the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even if lashings and wicked³¹ counsel threaten, our faith cannot be vanquished or changed.' And when he had been removed, he ordered the third son, named Philip, to be brought in. When he had said to him, 'Our lord the emperor Antoninus commanded that you sacrifice to the omnipotent gods', Philip replied and said: 'These are not gods, nor are they omnipotent; but they are empty idols, wretched and senseless; and those who wish to sacrifice to them shall be in eternal danger.' And when Philip had been removed, he ordered the fourth, named Silvanus, to be present; to whom he spoke thus: 'As I see it, this procedure is agreeable to you and your foul mother, that in scorning the commands of the emperors you shall all perish together.' Silvanus replied and said: 'If we fear transitory death, we will incur eternal punishment. And because we truly know what rewards are prepared for the just, and what sort of punishment is appointed for sinners, we accordingly scorn Roman law with confidence, so that we may keep divine commandments by scorning idols, such that, obeying Almighty God, we may acquire eternal life. Those who worship demons will die with them in everlasting fire.'

l'histoire de la praefectura, pp. 123–4 [with n. 2] and 125; Platner–Ashby, pp. 220–3; Richardson, pp. 160–2 with fig. 36; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 158–9 with fig. 67; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 111–12, with fig. 26 (no. 9); and V. Kockel, 'Forum Augustum', *LTUR* II, pp. 289–95, with figs. 116–17.

³⁰ Cf. II Macc. 7: 28.

³¹ Reading *iniusta* with the Bollandists in lieu of Künstle's *iusta* (which is attested in the Karlsruhe manuscript, the earliest of the surviving manuscripts).

4. And when Silvanus had been removed, he ordered the fifth, Alexander, to be presented; to whom he said: 'You will have pity on your life, still in its infancy, if you are not recalcitrant and if you follow those things which are pleasing to our king³² Antoninus. Therefore sacrifice to the gods, so that you can be a friend of the august emperors, and have both life and favour.' Alexander replied: 'I am a servant of Christ. I confess Him in my speech, hold Him in my heart, adore Him incessantly. Tender youth, which you see (before you), has white-haired wisdom, and worships the one God. Your gods, together with their worshippers, shall end up in everlasting death.' And when this (brother) had been removed, he [Publius] ordered the sixth, Vitalis, to be brought in. He spoke thus to him: 'Perhaps you will choose to live, and not come to a deadly end?' Vitalis replied: 'Who is it, who hopes to live best? —the one who hopes to have God, or a demon, in his favour?' Publius said: 'And who is a demon?' Vitalis replied: "'All the gods of the pagans are demons, but the Lord made the heavens",³³ and everyone who worships them [the demons].' And when he had been removed, he ordered the seventh, Martial, to come in. He said to him: 'Having become the agents of your own cruel punishment, you scorn the ordinances of the august (emperors), and persist in your own destruction.' Martial replied: 'O if only you could know what punishments are prepared for the worshippers of idols! Thus far God does not hesitate to reveal His anger to you and your idols. All those who do not confess Christ to be the true God shall (end up) in eternal flames.' Then he ordered the seventh (son) to be removed. And, with these proceedings at an end, he reported everything in writing, in due sequence, to Antoninus the king.

5. Then Antoninus sent them to various executioners³⁴ so that they could be butchered with various tortures. One executioner killed the first brother with lead-weighted whips.³⁵ Another destroyed the second and third (by beating

³² During the classical period, the Romans were reluctant to describe their emperors as kings; the use of *rex*, therefore, is a feature of late antiquity. On the Romans' reluctance to use the word *rex* to describe a Roman emperor, see Griffin, *Seneca*, pp. 141–6, and Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 613–16. The title became wholly appropriate only after the reigns of the Germanic kings Odoacer (476–93) and Theoderic (493–526)—that is, from the late fifth century onwards—although it had been anticipated a century earlier in, for example, the *Vita S. Martini* of Sulpicius Severus, who, writing in the last decade of the fourth century (394–9), described the emperors Constantius and Julian as 'kings' (ii. 5).

³³ Ps. 95: 5 ('omnes dii gentium daemonia, at vero dominus caelos fecit').

³⁴ The transmitted text (as printed by all editors) here reads *iudices*, 'judges'. But who were these various 'judges'? Publius, in consultation with the emperor, has already sentenced to death the mother and her seven sons (in any case, as urban prefect he himself had the authority to order a capital sentence and was not legally bound to seek the emperor's approval for his sentencing). From this it is clear that the persons described in the transmitted text as 'judges' are not *iudices* but are simply executioners. I suspect therefore that the word *uindices* ('punishers', 'executioners') has been corrupted to *iudices* during the course of transmission.

³⁵ On *plumbatae* ('lead-weighted whips'), see Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 89–90. Some *plumbatae*, recovered from excavations in Roman catacombs, are illustrated in *DACL* V/2, cols. 1640–2, figs. 4474–5, s.v. 'Flagellation (supplice de la)'.

them) with staves. Another killed the fourth by throwing him over a precipice. Another made the fifth, sixth, and seventh undergo capital punishment, and ordered their mother to be beheaded. And thus by various punishments he [Antoninus] destroyed them all in this life. All of them were made victors and martyrs of Christ; triumphing with their mother, they flew off to eternal rewards in heaven; scorning the threats of men, their punishments and beatings, for the love of God, in the kingdom of heaven they became friends of Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

II

SS. Anastasia, Chrysogonus, and Companions

*c.*425; relevant to the *titulus*-churches of St Anastasia and St Chrysogonus

One of the striking features of the ecclesiastical landscape of Rome in the fifth century—and probably much earlier—was the presence of what are called *titulus*-churches, that is to say, local neighbourhood or parish churches, which were founded on property donated to the Church by well-intentioned (and presumably wealthy) patrons.¹ In records from the late fifth century, notably the *acta* of a synod held in Rome in 499,² such churches are identified by the name of the original donor, e.g. *titulus Aemilianae*, where the original donor was an unknown woman named Aemiliana. Furthermore, because the pope—at least in the early centuries following the peace of the Church (which in Italy and Africa began with the cessation of the ‘Great Persecution’ in 306, and with the restoration of confiscated church property when Miltiades became pope in 311)³—attempted to preserve the notion of the unity of all Roman churches, embracing not only the Lateran (and the Vatican) but all the presbyteral or parish churches as well, the practice of celebrating what are called ‘stational’ masses in these churches developed, whereby the pope and his clergy travelled on foot to the individual churches to celebrate mass on fixed dates of the liturgical calendar.⁴ Two of the most prominent *titulus*-churches, whose clergy

¹ On *titulus*-churches, see the fundamental studies by L. Duchesne, ‘Les titres presbytéraux et les diaconies’, in his *Scripta minora*, pp. 17–43 [originally publ. 1886]; Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, esp. pp. 117–73; Lanzoni, ‘I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica’, esp. pp. 220–4; Vieliard, ‘Les titres romains’; *idem*, *Recherches sur les origines*, esp. pp. 31–7; F. Guidobaldi, ‘L’inserimento delle chiese titolari’; and, most recently, Hillner, ‘Families, Patronage, and the Titular Churches of Rome’. Hillner points out (pp. 226–8) that whereas earlier scholars such as Kirsch had regarded *titulus*-churches as third-century foundations, more modern research, pioneered by Charles Piétri (*Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 90–6, 569–73) and developed by Victor Saxer (‘La chiesa di Roma’, pp. 553–71, esp. 554–5 on the *titulus*-churches founded after Pope Silvester), considers many of them to be post-Constantinian.

² Printed MGH, AA XII, pp. 399–415.

³ See Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 111–13.

⁴ There is a clear and accessible account of the Roman stational liturgy in Willis, *Further Essays*, pp. 1–87. The calendar dates of stational masses are recorded in the early sacramentaries

were signatories to the *acta* of the Roman synod of 499 and at which stational masses were celebrated, were the churches of S. Anastasia on the Palatine, and of S. Crisogono in Trastevere.⁵

The church of S. Anastasia is located on the south-western slope of the Palatine, adjacent to the Circus Maximus and the *Forum Boarium*. The present church, with its Baroque façade, dates from 1721–2 and is a rebuilding of an earlier medieval church. The original (late antique) church of St Anastasia lies beneath this present church; it was built in turn on the first floor of an *insula*, which had served as a store-house for the imperial buildings of the Palatine and was fronted by numerous shops (second–third centuries AD). This original church probably dates from the mid-fourth century;⁶ it is recorded as a *titulus*-church from the late fifth century.⁷ In any case, we know from a fifth-century epigram preserved in two early medieval *syllogae* that Pope Damasus (366–84) embellished the apse of this church with a ‘picture’ of some sort (*picturae...honore*), possibly a fresco, which was subsequently replaced under Pope Hilarus (461–8) by a lavish mosaic;⁸ another metrical inscription records that Longinianus, urban prefect of Rome (402–8), had provided the church with a baptistery.⁹ Richard Krautheimer observed that the cruciform shape of the original church, with its semicircular apse, was unique in Rome at this time, although the form is well attested in Asia Minor and elsewhere in Europe.¹⁰ It was in any case an

and lectionaries (see Appendix V); for discussion, see Kirsch, ‘Le stazioni liturgiche’; *idem*, *Die Stationskirchen des Missale Romanum*; Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, pp. 105–66; and Quattrocchi, ‘Le processioni stazionali’.

⁵ The principal evidence for the number of such *titulus*-churches—some twenty-five churches are in question—is provided by the list of signatories to the above-mentioned Roman synod of 499 (printed MGH, AA XII, pp. 399–415); the *acta* of the synod are subscribed by seventy-one Italian bishops, followed by sixty-seven presbyters of Roman *titulus*-churches (pp. 410–15); and see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. lxvi–lxxii, 124–5.

⁶ On the church of S. Anastasia, see Duchesne, ‘Sainte-Anastasie’, in his *Scripta minora*, pp. 45–71 [originally publ. 1887]; *DACL* I/2, cols. 1919–24 [J. P. Kirsch]; P. B. Whitbread, ‘The Church of St Anastasia in Rome’, *American Journal of Archaeology* 2nd ser. 31 (1927), 405–20; Junyent, ‘La maison romaine’; Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 43–63, with pls. VII–X; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 134–5, with pl. XVI; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 142–4; M. Cecchelli, ‘S. Anastasia, titulus’, *LTUR* I, pp. 37–8; A. Cerrito, ‘Contributo allo studio del *titulus Anastasiae*’, in *Marmoribus vestita*, ed. Brandt and Pergola, I, pp. 345–71; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 140–2.

⁷ On St Anastasia as a *titulus*-church, see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 18–23; Lanzoni, ‘I titoli presbiteriali di Roma antica’, pp. 252–3; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 172–3.

⁸ *ICL* 901 (inc. ‘Antistes Damasus’); the poem is preserved in two *syllogae*: that of Einsiedeln (ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, p. 24 [no. 25]) and the Fourth Lorsch *sylloge* (*ibid.* p. 150 [no. 18]). On these *syllogae*, see Appendix II, p. 638.

⁹ *ICL* 13329 (inc. ‘Qui peccatorum sordes’); ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, p. 150 [no. 19] (from the *Sylloge Laurehamensis Quarta*).

¹⁰ *CBCR* I, p. 62: ‘il primo stadio di Sant’Anastasia, quale è rappresentato dell’edifice cruciforme, costituisce un’eccezione molto interessante del tipo normale di architettura paleo-cristiana in Roma.’

important *titulus*-church,¹¹ because it was here that the crosses for papal stational processions were kept (see Appendix IV (b) [§14], p. 664).

The present church of S. Crisogono in the Trastevere is also the Baroque renovation of a medieval (twelfth-century) church; the late antique church, dating (probably) from the fifth century, lies beneath its modern successors, and was brought to light by excavations conducted between 1906 and 1924.¹² This original church consisted of a large hall which had previously been part of a wealthy *domus*, perhaps that of an original founder named Chrysogonus; parts of this *domus* survive, and may be seen beneath the present church. To the hall or nave were subsequently added a portico to the east and an apse to the west. The nave was decorated with mural frescoes, fragments of which survive. This *titulus*-church of S. Crisogono was sited at an important location for the early Christian community,¹³ lying across the Tiber just west of the *Pons Aemilius* on a road leading up to the Via Aurelia (the modern Via della Lungaretta) and St Peter's on the Vatican.¹⁴

In spite of the presence in Rome of two important churches in the names of these saints, neither Anastasia nor Chrysogonus was a Roman martyr. Neither is recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* as being buried in a suburban cemetery (see Appendix I), and neither is the subject of an epigram of Pope Damasus (see Appendix II). Both were presumably patrons or founders who at some indeterminable time signed over their properties (the transfer being legally recorded in a *titulus* or 'deed') to the Church for the purposes of prayer and assembly. However, with the explosive growth of the cult of martyrs during the fourth century and later, and the increasing prestige of Roman martyrial churches such as those of St Laurence and St Sebastian, and given the fact that nothing whatsoever was known of either Anastasia or Chrysogonus, it was naturally assumed that they must have been martyrs. This assumption cohered during the sixth century at latest, for among the signatories of a synod held by Gregory the Great in 595 are priests of the *titulus sanctae Anastasiae*

¹¹ See n. 7.

¹² On the discovery and excavation of the original church, see O. Marucchi, 'L'antica basilica di S. Crisogono in Trastevere recentemente scoperta sotto la chiesa attuale', *Nuovo bollettino di archeologia cristiana* 17 (1911), 5–21. The fullest account of the original church is by Mesnard, *La basilique de Saint Chrysogone*, esp. pp. 9–17 (the excavations), 19–32 (the original church), and 33–56 (the cult of St Chrysogonus). Mesnard's reconstruction is followed by Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 144–64, with pl. XXI; see also B. M. Apollonj-Ghetti, 'Nuove considerazioni sulla chiesa inferiore di S. Crisogono', *RACr* 22 (1946), 235–49; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 163–5; Guerrini, 'Le chiese e i monasteri', p. 384; A. Pronti, 'S. Chrysogonus, titulus', *LTUR* I, pp. 266–7, with *addenda* at V, p. 236 [G. De Spirito] and VI, p. 7; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 174–5.

¹³ On S. Crisogono as a *titulus*-church, see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 108–13; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 252–3; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 238.

¹⁴ See Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 164: 'It was situated on a vital connection between the city centre and the great church to the apostle on Vatican Hill.'

and of the *titulus sancti Chrysogoni*,¹⁵ where the original founders of the two churches have been elevated to sainthood. Inevitably, curiosity about who these martyrs were led to the composition, probably by a cleric of S. Anastasia, of a *passio* describing their martyrdoms.

When the cleric in question undertook preliminary research to establish the identities of SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus,¹⁶ he will quickly have discovered that a saint named Anastasia had been martyred at *Sirmium* (in Pannonia, roughly modern Serbia), whence her remains were translated to Constantinople in the fifth century,¹⁷ and that a saint named Chrysogonus was martyred near Aquileia.¹⁸ How then were these non-Roman martyrs to be accommodated in a *passio* designed to illustrate the patron saints of two prominent Roman churches? The author framed his work with St Anastasia as its principal focus, so that in his narrative not only is St Anastasia linked to Chrysogonus and Aquileia (cc. 2–9), but also to the sisters Agape, Chionia, and Irene, who are said to have been martyred at Thessalonica in Macedonia (cc. 10–18), as well as to Theodota, who with her three sons was martyred at Nicaea in Bithynia (cc. 19, 29–31). Even from this brief summary, it is clear that the author of the *passio* has stitched together four separate *passiones*:¹⁹ of Anastasia (*BHL* 410), of Chrysogonus (*BHL* 1795), of Agape, Chionia, and Irene (*BHL* 118), and of Theodota and her sons (*BHL* 8093). The narrative

¹⁵ The *acta* and participants of the Roman synod of 595 are printed as part of the *Registrum* of Gregory the Great: *MGH, Epistulae* I, pp. 362–7, with the subscriptions of the presbyters of Roman *titulus*-churches at pp. 366–7; and see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. lxxi–lxxii, and 125.

¹⁶ It is not clear why the author should have wished to link St Anastasia with St Chrysogonus (cf. the similar doubts raised by Mesnard, *La basilique de Saint Chrysogone*, p. 36). From the point of view of the early Roman liturgy, a more appropriate linking might have been St Anastasia and St Sabina, for on Wednesday in *Quinquagesima* the *collecta* (that is, the gathering for prayers before the pope and his clergy set off for the station church in question: see R. Hierzegger, ‘*Collecta und Statio*’, esp. 517–47) was at S. Anastasia, with the consequent station mass taking place at S. Sabina, directly up the slope of the Aventine from S. Anastasia (see Appendix V(e), p. 673).

¹⁷ See Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 161, who notes that the remains of Anastasia were translated from *Sirmium* to Constantinople by Patriarch Gennadius (458–71). On the church of St Anastasia in Constantinople, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire byzantin*, I. *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, III: *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), pp. 26–9. Note that the Greek *passio* of St Anastasia (*BHG* 81; Halkin, *Légendes grecques*, pp. 86–157, with mention of the translation of the remains of St Anastasia to Constantinople at p. 157 [c. 40]) is simply a translation, made by one Theodore, of the present Latin *passio*.

¹⁸ On St Chrysogonus and Aquileia, see *DACL* I/2, cols. 2654–83 [H. Leclercq], at 2677; A. Niero, ‘I martiri aquileiesi’, *Antichità altoadriatiche*, XXII: *Aquileia nel IV secolo* (Udine, 1982), 151–74, at 158–65; G. Cuscito, *Martiri cristiani ad Aquileia e in Istria. Documenti archeologici e questioni agiografiche* (Udine, 1992), pp. 65–80; and Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, pp. 73–9 and 221–2.

¹⁹ The various saints are commemorated on different days of the liturgical calendar, as recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III): St Chrysogonus on 24 November; SS. Agape, Chionia, and Irene on 3 April; St Theodota on 2 August; and St Anastasia on 25 December.

device which links these disparate works is that St Anastasia is portrayed as an extremely wealthy Roman matron, subsequently a widow, who in her concern to perform works of Christian charity sells all her property and travels to places where Christians are being held in prison, in order to comfort them and distribute alms from her vast wealth. These travels take her from Rome to Aquileia, Thessalonica in Macedonia, and *Sirmium* in Pannonia, and eventually back to Rome, where she is tried and condemned by the urban prefect. The present work is thus an early example of what Hippolyte Delehaye described as an 'epic passion' (*passion épique*),²⁰ insofar as it relates a sequence of martyrdoms linked together by the person of the one martyr, Anastasia.²¹

The narrative of the amalgamated work is as follows. Following a prefatory chapter in which the author justifies the writing of *passiones* of martyrs, the story begins in Rome where Anastasia, the daughter of a wealthy (pagan) senator named Praetextatus, had leanings to Christianity (c. 2), and sought instruction from a learned Christian named Chrysogonus, who was being held under house arrest by the deputy (*vicarius*) of Rome (c. 3). Anastasia and Chrysogonus exchanged letters (cc. 4–7). At this point Diocletian, stationed in Aquileia, sent orders to Rome for all Christians being held under arrest by the urban prefect to be executed, but for Chrysogonus alone to be sent to him in Aquileia (c. 8). Anastasia therefore followed Chrysogonus to Aquileia. In Aquileia, Diocletian tried Chrysogonus in person and sentenced him to capital punishment; after execution, his body was recovered and buried by a Christian priest named Zoilus (c. 9). Zoilus reported to Anastasia that Chrysogonus had appeared to him in a dream-vision, and instructed Anastasia to go and comfort the sisters Agape, Chionia, and Irene (c. 9). These instructions provide the narrative link between the first part of the *passio*, concerned primarily with SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus, and the second, concerned with SS. Agape, Chionia, and Irene.

The second part of the *passio* (cc. 10–18, corresponding to *BHL* 118), was translated by the author from a Greek *passio* of three young sisters who were martyred at Thessalonica.²² It begins in Aquileia, where Diocletian is

²⁰ Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 171–226, and *idem*, *Cinq leçons*, p. 34: 'Pour qui connaît le légendier Romain, rien n'est plus aisé que de classer ce récit à côté d'une série d'autres longues Passions, comme celles de Marius et Marthe, de Marcel, de Nérée et Achillée, de Polychronius, d'Anastase, d'Eugénie, pour ne parler que des principales. Elles ont ceci de caractéristique qu'au lieu d'être les Actes d'un saint, elles groupent autour d'un martyr célèbre, qui devient comme le héros du cycle, une série d'autres martyrs...'

²¹ The amalgamated work is listed *CPL* 2163; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 121–2, 137–9; *DACL* I/2, cols. 1919–24 [J. P. Kirsch]; *BSS* I, cols. 1041–9 [Anastasia], 303–4 [Agape, Chionia, and Irene], IV, cols. 306–8 [Chrysogonus], and XII, cols. 303–5 [Theodota]; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 151–71; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 45–60.

²² The *passio* of SS. Agape, Chionia, and Irene (cc. 9–18) was translated by this author from a Greek source (*BHG* 34): see Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'Il testo greco originale', pp. 3–19; Franchi's

apparently in residence (c. 10), and where he summons the three of them to appear before him; after establishing that they are intransigent Christians, he sends them to prison, where they are visited and comforted by Anastasia, who has remained in Aquileia (c. 11). But then Diocletian departs for Macedonia, and orders all the Christians in prison (in Aquileia) to be brought along with him, including Agape, Chionia and Irene (c. 12). Anastasia presumably follows them, although the text does not mention this. On arrival in Macedonia (by which we are to understand the seat of the governor of the province, namely Thessalonica), Diocletian sends them to be tried by the governor, one Dulcitius; after disgracing himself, Dulcitius is replaced by Count Sisinnius; after the usual verbal exchanges, the three sisters are condemned and executed in Thessalonica (c. 18); Anastasia sends her men to recover their bodies.

The third part of the *passio* (cc. 19–20, 29–31, corresponding to *BHL* 8093), concerning the martyrdom of Theodota and her three sons, was similarly translated by the author from a Greek *passio*.²³ Theodota is said to be a native of Nicaea in the province of Bithynia, who had fled from there because of the violent persecution of Christians in that province. Meanwhile, Diocletian had returned from Macedonia to *Sirmium*, where Theodota was presented to him by a Count Leucadius, who petitioned the emperor to give Theodota to him as wife; if she would not consent to this marriage, he would undertake to execute her as a Christian (c. 19). Theodota negotiated an adjournment of this proposal, which allowed her and Anastasia time to attend to the Christian poor in Diocletian's prisons (c. 19). Diocletian then gave the order for all these Christians to be executed; and when Anastasia turned up to feed them, and found them gone, she burst into tears, which revealed that she was herself a Christian. She was therefore taken to the praetorian prefect of *Illyricum*, named Probus, by whom she was tried (cc. 20–5).²⁴ While she was being tried, Ulpian, the 'high priest' (*summus pontifex*) of the Capitol' showed up,²⁵ and asked that Anastasia be given to him in marriage; if she would not consent to sacrifice, he would have the authority to execute her. The emperor approved of this plan,²⁶ and Anastasia was taken by Ulpian back to his home (c. 26).²⁷

text is reprinted, with a facing-page English translation, in Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, II, pp. 281–93.

²³ See H. Delehaye, 'S. Théodote de Nicée', *AB* 54 (1937), 201–25, with the Greek text (*BHG* 1781) at pp. 220–5.

²⁴ The residence of the praetorian prefect of *Illyricum* was presumably in *Sirmium*.

²⁵ The Latin reads *Ulpianum qui Capitolii summus pontifex erat*: this would most naturally mean that he was the high priest of the great temple of Jupiter on the Capitol in Rome (see C. Reusser, 'Capitolium (Republik und Kaiserzeit)', *LTUR* I, pp. 232–4), and below, n. 94). There is no evidence in written sources for a 'Capitol' (*Capitolium*), so-called, in *Sirmium*.

²⁶ Are we to understand that the praetorian prefect consulted with the emperor on this matter? The text does not say so.

²⁷ The text is suspiciously vague on this point (*Quam ille ducens ad domum suam*): if Ulpian is the *summus pontifex* in Rome, then the implication is that he took Anastasia with him back to

During his attempts to coerce Anastasia, Ulpian was struck blind, and died, whereupon Anastasia repaired to the house of Theodota (c. 28).²⁸ At this point Count Leucadius arrived from Bithynia, and began to pester Theodota to marry him, on condition that she sacrifice (c. 29). When Theodota would not agree to his request, he sent her and her three sons back to the governor of Bithynia, who tried and executed them all in Nicaea (cc. 29–31). But Leucadius also handed Anastasia over to a judge (*iudex*), who is subsequently named as Lucillius and described as the ‘prefect’ (i.e. urban prefect?) (c. 32).²⁹ Lucillius sentenced her to be detained in prison; but when the imprisonment had no effect, he ordered her to be executed by being placed in a ship with 120 other condemned prisoners, and the ship to be taken out on the high seas and holed, so that all the prisoners would be drowned. The ship was duly holed; but the miraculous appearance of the spirit of the martyred Theodota prevented the ship from sinking, and after drifting for three days, the ship landed on the islands called *Palmariae* (c. 35).³⁰ Soldiers were sent to the islands, and Anastasia was finally executed by being burned alive; through the kind offices of the prefect’s wife, her body was recovered by a matron named Apollonia, and buried in the garden of her [Apollonia’s] home (c. 36).

The author’s attempt to stitch together four separate *passiones* has produced a very confusing narrative. The reader is obliged to ask: how does any of this relate to the churches of SS. Anastasia and Chrysogonus in Rome? The narrative begins in Rome, with Anastasia and Chrysogonus, before moving to Aquileia, where Chrysogonus is martyred, and then to Thessalonica and

Rome. Otherwise, the implication must be that he was *summus pontifex* of a temple on a ‘Capitol’ in *Sirmium*—for which there is no evidence whatsoever, written or archaeological.

²⁸ When Theodota was last mentioned in c. 19, she was described as a citizen of Nicaea (in Bithynia) who had fled the persecution there, and was subsequently arrested and brought before Diocletian who, so the text relates, had returned from Macedonia (Thessalonica) to *Sirmium*. This seems to imply that Theodota was living in *Sirmium* at the time of her arrest.

²⁹ The Latin text is unfortunately corrupt at this point (see the *app.crit.* in Moretti’s edition, p. 172). Delehayé printed *tradita sancta Anastasia praeffecto Illyrici* (p. 245), where the text does not name the prefect; but since the prefect in question is subsequently named as *Lucillius*, Moretti emended *Illyrici* to *Lucillio* (on the basis of the reading *Lucio* in some witnesses), and I follow Moretti’s emendation. The emendation has the effect of removing the location of Anastasia’s trial from *Sirmium* in *Illyricum* (where, as we saw in c. 21, the *praeffectus Illyrici* was named Probus, not Lucillius), and raises the possibility that, in the author’s conception, Anastasia was tried in Rome by the urban prefect Lucillius, who sentenced her to death by drowning (c. 35).

³⁰ The author specifically names these islands: *tertia vero die devoluti sunt ad insulas quas Palmarias vocant*. The *Palmariae* are a group of tiny islands—called the Pontine islands—in the Tyrrhenian Sea, 6 miles west of Ponza (i.e. west of the Bay of Naples); see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 44 (C4), as well as Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 152–3. It is inconceivable that a ship which had been holed could have drifted in three days from *Illyricum* (which in any case is not on the sea, but far from it) down the length of the Adriatic Sea, around the ‘heel’ of Italy, through the Messenian Straits, and then back up the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Pontine islands to the west of Naples. But the story would be more credible if the ship had been launched (say) at Portus, the port of Rome, towed out to the high sea, and then abandoned.

Nicaea, where other Christians, associates of Anastasia, are martyred. Yet there are traces in the text of an attempt by the author to conclude the narrative in the general vicinity of Rome, rather than in *Sirmium*: the attempt by Ulpian to marry Anastasia (in order to acquire her vast wealth), the *summus pontifex* of the Capitol—a description which would pertain more appropriately to Rome than to *Sirmium*, which is not known to have had a ‘Capitol’—and the prefect’s attempt to execute Anastasia and other prisoners by holing a ship which after three days drifts to the Pontine Islands (*Palmariae*)—a group of small islands located to the south of Rome, opposite the Bay of Naples, whereas there are no islands known to be called *Palmariae* in the Adriatic Sea (and in any case, the Adriatic is a very long way from *Sirmium*, where the capital sentence was given). If, for the sake of argument, the author had envisaged Ulpian, the *summus pontifex*, as taking Anastasia back with him to Rome, and that she had subsequently been handed over to the *urban* prefect in Rome (rather than to the praetorian prefect in *Illyricum*),³¹ a capital sentence given by the urban prefect in Rome could have involved a ship being launched probably at Porto, being holed somewhere off Rome in the Tyrrhenian Sea, and then drifting southwards within three days to the Pontine Islands near Naples. In such a scenario the body of St Anastasia would have been taken by the matron Apollonia back to Rome, and buried in her garden (on the Palatine?), over which a basilica—the basilica subsequently known as S. Anastasia?—was subsequently constructed. Such a hypothesis would have the merit of centring the focus of the *passio* on Rome, rather than on *Sirmium*. In any case, the *Capitolium* is in Rome, not *Sirmium*, and the *Palmariae* are in the Tyrrhenian Sea, not the Adriatic.³²

The fact is that the author of the *passio* was very ambitious, from the point of view of Latin style, but not sufficiently ambitious in the matter of combining and coordinating the four separate *passiones* which he laid under contribution. The reason is probably that he had concerns other than that of producing a seamless narrative. For example, Kate Cooper and Cécile Lanéry have helpfully drawn attention to the fact that much of the narrative is focussed on women saints, matrons, and virgins (male saints, such as Chrysogonus, Zoilus, and Eutychianus, scarcely figure in the narrative), and that the *passio* was arguably composed for a circle of Roman matrons who were interested in ascetic practice and perhaps, like Anastasia, detested their husbands³³—perhaps even, as

³¹ It is of course the case that the tenure of a prefecture did not last longer than a year or two, so perhaps the author was envisaging a change of prefect, Probus giving way to Lucillius.

³² *Contra* Lanéry, who locates the *Palmariae* among the islands of the Dalmatian coast: ‘L’hagiographe... ne connaissait pas grand-chose de la martyre Anastasie de Sirmium: il situe même son martyre sur une île de la cote dalmate, et non dans la capitale d’Illyrie’ (‘Hagiographie’, p. 58).

³³ Cooper, ‘Of Romance and Mediocrity’, esp. pp. 108–10, and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, p. 58. Cooper’s article is reproduced in her book, *The Virgin and the Bride*, pp. 116–43 (‘The imprisoned heroine’).

Paola Moretti suggested, a circle of Pannonian matrons living in Rome.³⁴ In any case, it was to circles of matrons such as these that Pelagius and Jerome addressed their attentions, and the author of the *passio* of St Anastasia may have been doing likewise.

The association with circles of aristocratic matrons squares well with the early fifth-century dating for the *passio* suggested by Lanéry. Such a dating implies that the *passio* of St Anastasia was an early, and perhaps the first, attempt by a Roman author to compose a so-called ‘epic *passio*’, in which the descriptions of various martyrdoms are linked together by the experiences of a single martyr. On this assumption, the literary form of later epic passions—notably those of St Sebastian (III) and SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII)—was indebted to that of St Anastasia. The content of the first chapter of the present *passio* also bears on the question of dating, for in its outspoken support of the practice of reading *passiones* of martyrs it would seem to be expressing opposition to views enunciated explicitly in the so-called pseudo-Gelasian *Decretum*, a work which was confected in southern Gaul at the beginning of the sixth century.

Likewise the *gesta* of the holy martyrs, which are illustrated with countless descriptions of torture and the miraculous triumphs of their confessions. What Catholic believer could doubt that they suffered even greater (torments) in their struggles, and tolerated all these not through their own strength, but through the grace and assistance of God? But therefore, in accordance with ancient custom, and through (the exercise of) extreme vigilance, these [*gesta*] are not to be read in church, because the names of those persons who composed them are completely unknown, and they are judged by infidels and fools to be silly, or less appropriate than what the nature of the situation requires.³⁵

On the argument that the author of the *passio* was replying directly to the *Decretum*, the *passio* would have to be later than the *Decretum*, hence later than the beginning of the sixth century.³⁶ However, Lanéry has argued that the views expressed in the *Decretum* must have been in circulation earlier, possibly as early as the first half of the fifth century;³⁷ and in any case, it is possible that c. 1 represents a later addition to the original text (recall that no manuscript of

³⁴ See Consolino, ‘Modelli di santità femminile’, pp. 91–3, and esp. Moretti, *La ‘Passio Anastasiae’*, pp. 28–33, who cites the example of Luceia, daughter of the Pannonian Viventius, who was urban prefect (365–7) and praetorian prefect of the Gauls (368–71). Viventius dedicated an inscribed tablet to Massimilla, on which she is described as a *virgo ancilla Dei civis Pannoniae*, in the cemetery *ad catacumbas* (i.e. at S. Sebastiano) on the Via Appia (Moretti, *ibid.* p. 31).

³⁵ See *Decretum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis* [CPL 1676] iv. 4, ed. E. von Dobschütz, *Das Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis in kritischem Text* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 39–41.

³⁶ See De Gaiffier, ‘Un prologue hagiographique?’

³⁷ Thus Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 53–4.

the *passio* dates from earlier than c.800). On balance, the fact that the present *passio* was laid under contribution by the author of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* (III), which can be securely dated to the second quarter of the fifth century (see pp. 93–4), suggests that it dates from earlier in the fifth century, perhaps as early as the first quarter.

Text. The *Passio S. Anastasiae* is preserved in a very substantial number of manuscripts, well over 200.³⁸ But in spite of its popularity, it was only relatively recently that a reliable edition of the text became available (it is not included in Mombritius or in the *Acta SS.*): an edition by Hippolyte Delehaye was published in 1936,³⁹ and that by Paola Moretti in 2006.⁴⁰ Delehaye's edition is based solely on two witnesses (Delehaye was an excellent Latinist and an experienced editor, so his edition commands respect in spite of its narrow manuscript base); that of Moretti is based on the full collation of some fifty-five, including nearly all of those dated between the eighth and eleventh centuries. The following translation is based on the text of Moretti, but I have compared readings with the text of Delehaye. Of all the *passiones* translated in the present volume, the *Passio S. Anastasiae* is the only one which can be read in a reliable critical edition.

1. If someone should wish carefully to investigate all the things which have been done—and are (still) being done—by the saints, he acquires the fruit of his investigation for himself and for many others—in the same way that a fruit-bearing tree not unreasonably takes up land while it is living,⁴¹ when it is adorned with its own fruit, and everyone who eats fruit from it is nourished. (Likewise) we record what the saints did, what they said, and what they suffered, as we found in their *gesta*.⁴² You who eagerly read of the victories of Christ (and) eagerly hear them, reveal yourselves as catholic (Christians). (But) I ask you (others), who judge that these writings [i.e. the *passiones* of martyrs] should be abolished along with the apocryphal writings: by whom is the canon of all holy scriptures established? Is it not (established) by those who preferred to die for that very canon, rather than to be conquered? For what did

³⁸ *BHLms* lists some 148 witnesses, to which Lanéry ('Hagiographie', p. 52) added a further sixty-four, making a total of some 212; and of course there are large numbers of manuscripts which preserve single elements of the work (e.g. the *passiones* of Agape, Chionia, and Irene, or of Theodota and her sons).

³⁹ *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 221–49.

⁴⁰ Moretti, *La 'Passio Anastasiae'*, with discussion of the manuscripts, and their relationship, at pp. 45–98. See further P. F. Moretti, 'L'edizione di un testo minore riccamente tradito, la *Passio Anastasiae*. Problemi e vantaggi', in *Prassi ecdotiche. Esperienze editoriali su testi manoscritti e testi a stampa*, ed. A. Cadioli and P. Chiesa (Milan, 2008), pp. 65–93, which contains updated information on the manuscripts which formed the basis of her edition.

⁴¹ Cf. Luke 13: 7–9 (the parable of the unproductive fig tree).

⁴² This first sentence is incoherent, as it is printed by both Delehaye and Moretti: the words *et* (in the phrase *et sibi*) and *cum et* (in the phrase *cum et ipse suis*) are superfluous, and have been rightly ignored by Moretti in her translation of the sentence.

the martyrs maintain? The orthodox faith, which is contained in a certain number of books among the sacred writings. The sacred writings have reason to be grateful to them [the martyrs], because they abide through their [the martyrs'] perseverance; and therefore the martyrs wish that their deeds be recorded, so that in the sight of God and men the saints will always be praised—those who in the sight of unbelievers suffered monstrous tortures for their [the books'] defence. While accepting none but the canonical writings, I have composed this present text carefully, revealing catholic teaching as it was preserved by catholic martyrs. I am providing an example for later (generations); I am transmitting instruction to believers; I am demonstrating the art of war to soldiers of Christ.⁴³ It is clear that those who do not wish to read of these combatants do not wish to fight, if the necessity arises. Let the unbelievers, who disdain to watch the champions of the Lord, command silence, let them watch the devil's pugilists. We are speaking of divine virtues, writing (of them), preaching (them): let envious persons (try to) prevent (them), let frightened persons command silence, let them flog those who despise them, let them rebuke those who are reading them, let them freely reproach those listening to them. Wounds incurred for the glory of the emperor produce glorious soldiers,⁴⁴ for love of Whom [the 'emperor' i.e. God] we expect willingly to lay down even our souls.⁴⁵ We bring forth from hidden places the ensign⁴⁶ of the triumphs and victories of Christ. For we know that the struggles, which they [the martyrs] visibly endured, arouse us invisibly every day and seriously wound those fighting negligently. Therefore, in order to handle weapons (skilfully), watch those who are fighting, pay attention to these undertakings, so that the Enemy may begin to fear you.⁴⁷

2. We read that Anastasia, the daughter of the illustrious senator (*vir illustris*) Praetextatus,⁴⁸ was taught by the exceedingly Christian man Chrysogonus,

⁴³ Cf. II Tim. 2: 3.

⁴⁴ A similar phrase is found in the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.27: 'Wounds suffered for the emperor make more glorious soldiers'), and it has therefore been suspected that the author of the *passio* of St Sebastian—arguably Arnobius the Younger—was here drawing on the *passio* of St Anastasia (see Moretti's *app. font.*, and p. 108).

⁴⁵ Cf. John 10: 15 and 10: 17.

⁴⁶ Reading *labarum* for the transmitted *laborem* (thus Delehay; Moretti emends to *labara*).

⁴⁷ The Bollandist Godefroid Hensgens (Henschenius) plausibly suggested that the 'prologue' (c. 1) may have been intended as the prologue to a legendary, not to the *passio* itself, inasmuch as St Anastasia's feast day falls on 25 December, the date at which most legendaries begin; but his suggestion was rejected by B. de Gaiffier, 'Un prologue "passe-partout"', *AB* (1972), 118; see discussion by F. Dolbeau, 'Les prologues de légendiers latins', in *Les prologues médiévaux*, ed. J. Hamesse (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 345–93, at 358–9. In any event, this prologue was frequently recycled: in the *passiones* of St Pudenciana (*BHL* 6991), SS. Cantius, Cantianus, and Cantianilla (*BHL* 1545), SS. Fidelis, Exanthus, and Carpophorus (*BHL* 2922b), and St Secundus of Amelia (*BHL* 7558); see Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 53 n. 79.

⁴⁸ The name Praetextatus suggests, and was evidently intended to recall, that of the great senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, who was a leading defender of pagan religions in the famous senate debate over the 'Altar of Victory' (384), and had been both urban praefect (367–8)

who came to her attention by this eventuality.⁴⁹ Although, being nobly born, she was so accomplished that she could scarcely be found to have an equal among other women, she dressed herself in the most common clothing⁵⁰ and, with the sole companionship of one (slave-)girl, she visited the prisons. For there were soldiers of Christ, in chains and in the prisons, whom she could not have visited unless, dressed in peasants' clothing, she pretended to be a pauper on earth, so that she could acquire riches in heaven. She went therefore to the public holding cells, and bribed the guards with money as best she could. Once inside, although she ministered to all those who were afflicted, yet for the saints [i.e. Christians] who were in chains for the name of God, her concern was particularly inspired: she would wash their feet, anoint their heads, comb out their hair which lengthy imprisonment had caused to grow. Meanwhile, while she was doing all this attentively, and had withdrawn from congress with her husband through feigned illness, it came to the notice of this jealous man that she was circulating among the prisons in plebeian attire and was visiting the confessors of God with great diligence. Then in great indignation Publius her husband appointed such guards over his own household that they would not allow Anastasia access to look out of even one tiny window.

3. By the orders of Diocletian there was a man of God in chains named Chrysogonus, who, remaining for two years under the jurisdiction of the deputy (*vicarius*),⁵¹ suffered a great deal and was comforted by the support

and praetorian prefect of Italy, *Illyricum*, and Africa (384); see *PLRE* I, pp. 722–4; Chastagnol, *Les fastes de la préfecture de Rome*, pp. 171–8; and M. Kahlos, *Vettius Agorius Praetextatus. A Senatorial Life in between* (Rome, 2002). To contemporary Christians, the name Praetextatus was a byword for sacrilegious pagan behaviour; see Jerome, *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* [*CPL* 612], c. 8: 'Miserabilis Praetextatus, qui designatus consul est mortuus. Homo sacrilegus, et idolorum cultor, solebat ludens beato papae Damaso dicere: "Facite me Romanae urbis episcopum, et ero protinus Christianus"' (*PL* XXIII, col. 361). (I owe this reference to Mark Humphries.)

⁴⁹ The instruction of Anastasia by Chrysogonus—which may simply have consisted of the exchange of letters quoted in cc. 4–7—evidently took place in Rome, and while Chrysogonus was being held under house arrest by the deputy (*vicarius*) of Rome.

⁵⁰ Kate Cooper (*The Virgin and the Bride*, p. 122) makes the valuable observation that Augustine, in a letter to Edicia, wrote that for a woman of senatorial class to adopt common clothing when appearing in public 'might be understood as an advertisement that sexual relations between the couple had ceased' (Augustine, *Ep.* cclxii. 4 (*CSEL* LVII, p. 624)). This is presumably why Publius reacts so violently to Anastasia's dressing in common clothing.

⁵¹ The 'deputy' (*vicarius*) served as second-in-command to a prefect. The prefect in question might in principle be either the urban prefect, or the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy (and Africa). On the post of deputy to the praetorian prefect, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 47 and 1454; on that of the urban prefect, see Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, p. 19; *idem*, 'The Vicarius Urbis Romae and the Urban Prefecture'; and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 62–5. We subsequently learn (c. 8) that the deputy of the urban prefect is in question here. (Note that no *vicarius* of either prefecture named Rufus is recorded in *PLRE*; and of the many persons named Rufus listed in *PIR*² VII/1, pp. 109–23, none is a *vicarius* contemporary with Diocletian and Maximian.) The Latin here reads *qui per biennium in vicarii officio degens multa perpressus, sanctae Anastasiae alimonia fovebatur*. Delehayé (*Étude sur le légendier romain*,

of Anastasia. He [Chrysogonus] was being held at the house of the deputy named Rufus—whom the Lord Jesus Christ had acquired, through Chrysogonus, together with all his household. Accordingly, when there was no one who could be sent to Anastasia, a certain old Christian woman was found living in the vicinity of St Anastasia who, as is customary with old women, was seen to care for the needs of infants and women. On this occasion, having entered the house of St Anastasia, she began to be a go-between between her [Anastasia] and all the confessors of Christ—among whom, both in earthly nobility as well as in heavenly wisdom, Chrysogonus was proven to be a marvel and to be more distinguished than all others. He received from the aforementioned old woman a letter of St Anastasia, the text of which is as follows:

4. 'To Chrysogonus, the holy confessor of Christ, Anastasia (sends greetings). Although my father was a worshipper of idols, my mother Fausta is known always to have lived as thoroughly Christian and chaste. While I was still in the cradle itself she made me become a Christian [i.e. had me baptized]. After her death I undertook marriage to a profane husband, whose marriage-bed, through God's mercy, I was able to avoid through a feigned illness,⁵² and by day and night I follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. When this man squandered my patrimony—from which he is made illustrious (*illustratur*)—through unworthy and foul idolatries, he also committed me, as if I were a wicked sorceress, to such burdensome custody, that I suspect that I am losing my earthly existence. Nothing remains for me except, having given up the ghost, to succumb to death. In such a death, although I would rejoice in the confession of my Lord Jesus Christ, my mind is nevertheless greatly disturbed, because my wealth, all of which I have dedicated to God, down to the last penny, is being used to serve foul purposes alien to God; and therefore I beg you, man of God, that you pray insistently to the Lord, that He either see to it that He allow Publius to live so that he may come to His faith, or if He sees that he is to remain in the perversity of his unbelief, that He bid him to make way for His worshippers. For it is better for him to breathe out his spirit than to deny the Son of God and to hinder those who confess Him.⁵³ Indeed Almighty

p. 151) took this to mean that Chrysogonus exercised the office of *vicarius* ('deputy') for two years ('qui avait exercé pendant deux ans l'office de vicaire'). But this interpretation is untenable, for if Chrysogonus was himself the *vicarius*—a very senior magistrate—at this time, why did he suffer so greatly that he needed to be comforted by the handouts of Anastasia, whose attentions were devoted to Christian prisoners, not government officials? Moretti correctly saw that *officio* must here refer to the deputy's residence, where Chrysogonus is being held prisoner (see Moretti, *La 'Passio Anastasiae'*, p. 109, n. 2, and *TLL* IX/2, pp. 522.84–523.5, s.v. 'officium').

⁵² There is helpful discussion of Anastasia's celibacy (and feigned illness), and the interest which such a narrative would have had for fifth-century Roman matrons, by Cooper, 'Of Romance and Mediocrity', esp. pp. 114–18 (essentially reprinted in *The Virgin and the Bride*, pp. 119–27).

⁵³ Cf. I Cor. 9: 15.

Christ is witness that, if I am freed, I shall cleave to the footsteps of the saints and shall conscientiously devote my care to all of them, as I had set out to do. Farewell, man of God, and remember me (in your prayers).'

5. When Chrysogonus had read this letter, having prayed in the company of many confessors, he wrote back to her as follows: 'Chrysogonus to Anastasia. Christ, walking on the waters,⁵⁴ will quickly come to you (as you are) vacillating amidst the storms and troubles of the world, and will with one word of His command curb the blast of the devil blowing against you.⁵⁵ Believe patiently, therefore, that Christ is to come to you placed, as it were, in the midst of the sea and, turning to yourself, shout out with the prophet saying, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why do you disturb me? Hope in God, for I shall still confess to Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God."⁵⁶ The proof of a divine gift is proved to be twofold, since both earthly things are returned to you, and heavenly things shall be given. For in this matter the Lord extends His favour to the ends of time, so that what He provides does not seem trivial to us. See that you are not disturbed by the fact that things contrary to your devout living are borne in upon you. For you shall not be deceived, but tested. What you think can be achieved by man is not a trustworthy defence, in the words of scripture: "Cursed is the man who places his trust in man; blessed is the man who places his trust in God."⁵⁷ Take care energetically, vigilantly, and strenuously to avoid sin; and seek consolation from God alone, Whose commandments you keep. For very quickly a time of peace will come to you, and, as it were, after the darkness of night you will receive the beautiful light of day, and after the glacial frost of winter has passed, golden and peaceful times will follow for you, so that you may offer temporary happiness to all those who are cast down for the love of Christ—through which without doubt you will obtain eternal (happiness). Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.'

6. As Anastasia was reading this letter, she acquired greater strength of faith, and began to rejoice as much for the power of her patience as previously she had been distressed by the oppression of her infidel husband. Meanwhile, as these things were transpiring, Publius, sitting in the Senate, unwillingly undertook a legation and was to set out for the land of Persia. Then returning home despondently, he tripled the surveillance around Anastasia, and placed as her guard one of his toadies, who was to deny her both light and food. He arranged it so that Anastasia would die, and he would remain as the proprietor of all her wealth. Fearing that, in his absence, Anastasia would do the very things which she usually did, he appointed zealous guards in addition to one of the toadies whom we mentioned, named Comasius. And so he set out, saying that: 'If I find her alive (when I return), I shall punish you all.' Accordingly he

⁵⁴ Cf. Matt. 14: 25 and Mark 6: 48.

⁵⁵ Cf. Exod. 15: 10 and Ps. 147: 18.

⁵⁶ Pss. 41: 12, 42: 5.

⁵⁷ Cf. Jer. 17: 5.

began to treat Anastasia in such a way that even water was scarcely given to her out of mercy. Then, reckoning that she would die in this dire situation, she wrote a letter to Chrysogonus, in these words:

7. 'Anastasia to Chrysogonus, confessor of Christ. The end for my body is coming. Remember me (and pray) that He may receive my soul for Whose love I suffer the things which you will learn about from the lips of this old woman.' To this St Chrysogonus sent back the following letter: 'Chrysogonus to Anastasia. It is always the case that darkness precedes the light. So too health returns after illness, and life is promised after death. Both adverse and prosperous things in this world are concluded by the one end point, so that despair does not overcome the wretched, nor elation the joyful. There is one sea on which the little ships of our bodies sail, and our souls offer their services like sailor(s) under the one pilot. Therefore the ships of certain persons, held together by the tight fittings of their keels, pass unharmed through the agitated waves of the dark ocean; but those of others, with flimsy joints of the planks, follow a course bordering on death even on a calm sea. The time is nigh that those who do not think of how to reach the port of salvation will perish. But you, O unimpeachable servant of Christ, embrace the trophy of the Cross of Christ with all your heart, and prepare yourself for the Lord's work, in which, when you obey your desires, you will approach Christ with the palm of martyrdom.' On receiving this letter, Anastasia was confident indeed in Christ, but she groaned under the violence of the guards. Meanwhile, when three months had passed, the body of Publius was brought back by ship, and all those who were guarding her fled in various directions. St Anastasia, setting out in freedom, went to Chrysogonus, and with tearful joy related to him everything which had happened. Having sold all her worldly goods, she circulated among the prisons dressed in very humble clothing, and, as if 'taking care of her own eyes',⁵⁸ she provided the servants of the Lord with the necessities (of life).

8. Then when Diocletian, stationed in the region of Aquileia,⁵⁹ was intent on executing Christians, a report circulated concerning all the Christians (held

⁵⁸ The phrase 'taking care of one's own eyes' (*oculorum suorum curam gerens*) is apparently a popular expression meaning 'looking after one's own interests', but is not recorded as such in *TLL* or the dictionaries.

⁵⁹ For the imperial residences and journeys of Diocletian, see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 49–54; but in the extensive record of Diocletian's movements, no mention is made of Aquileia. On the basis of one of the *Panegyrici Latini* (vii (vi). 6. 2: 'in Aquileiensi palatio'), it has been thought that there was an imperial residence at Aquileia from c.290 onwards: see M. Bonfioli, 'Soggiorni imperiali a Milano e ad Aquileia da Diocleziano a Valentiniano III', *Antichità altoadriatiche*, IV. *Aquileia e Milano* (Udine, 1973), pp. 125–49, at 130–1; but note that Bonfioli's arguments, and the very existence of an imperial palace at Aquileia, have been doubted by Noel Duval, 'Les palais impériaux de Milan et d'Aquilée: Réalité et mythe', *ibid.* pp. 151–8, esp. 155–7; and see more recently, Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme*, pp. 17–24, who likewise doubts the existence of an imperial palace at Aquileia.

prisoner by) the urban prefecture.⁶⁰ Then he, the king,⁶¹ wrote back saying that they ought all to be executed, but that Chrysogonus alone was to be sent to him. Having followed him [Chrysogonus], St Anastasia, although she was, as we said, a woman of noble and delicate constitution, applied herself so manfully that she made better provision for the saints [i.e. Christians] at Aquileia than she had done at Rome. Meanwhile the utterly wicked Diocletian orders the eminently distinguished Chrysogonus to be brought before him. When he had said to him, 'Accept the honour of the prefecture, take even the distinction of the consulship: adorn the distinction of your lineage by adoring the gods and sacrificing to them', Chrysogonus replied: 'I adore one God in my mind, worship Him in my heart, venerate Him with pure deeds. But I execrate and ridicule the idols of gods and goddesses, with their assumed power, because I know them to be treasure-houses of demons, in which demons reside. And I reject the magistracies promised by you as if they were mud, which is trodden underfoot.' Then Diocletian ordered him to be taken to the place called *Aquae Gradatae*,⁶² and there to be decapitated; and his body was cast into the sea near to an estate called *Ad Saltus*,⁶³ on which lived three Christian sisters—Agape, Chionia, and Irene—together with their old priest, Zoilus.⁶⁴

9. This priest recovered the body of St Chrysogonus and placed⁶⁵ it with great care in a wooden coffin, and buried it in a subterranean crypt in his house. It was revealed to him in a vision where the sea had cast up his [Chrysogonus'] head. And going to a promontory,⁶⁶ he found it as if it had

⁶⁰ This statement (*christianis omnibus praefecturae urbanae*) indicates that, in the mind of the author, Rufus the vicar was deputy to the *urban* prefect, not to the praetorian prefect (see n. 51).

⁶¹ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

⁶² This same place is mentioned in the *passio* of SS. Cantius, Cantianus, and Cantianilla, the martyrs of Aquileia (*BHL* 1546), where a more precise topographical reference is given: 'duodecimo miliario ab urbe Aquileia trans flumen loco qui vocatur Aquae Gradatae' (*Acta SS., Maii* VII [1688], pp. 239, 428), that is, at the twelfth mile from Aquileia, and across the river Isonzo, hence near the present-day village of San Canzian d'Isonzo; see Tavano, 'Indagini sulle *Aquae Gradatae*,' esp. pp. 161–3, as well as Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, p. 183, with further reference to G. Cuscito, 'Testimonianze archeologico-monumentali sul più antico culto dei santi nella *Venetia et Histria*,' *Aquileia Nostra* 45–6 (1974–5), 631–68, at 641–2.

⁶³ Tavano ('Indagini sulle "Aquae Gradatae"', p. 162, n. 22) suggests that this place, too, was at the twelfth mile from Aquileia, near the present-day village of San Giovanni del Timavo (it is, of course, no longer next to the sea).

⁶⁴ The martyrdoms of Agape, Chionia, and Irene were commemorated on 3 April, and are treated below, cc. 10–18; these chapters constitute in effect a separate *passio*, and are listed separately as *BHL* 118. Note also that a priest named Zoilus performs the function of burying the bodies of the Aquileian martyrs Cantius, Cantianus, and Cantianilla in the *passio* of those saints (*BHL* 1546).

⁶⁵ Understanding *condivit* as the preterite of *condo* (i.e. *condidit*) rather than of *condio* (i.e. *condivit*, 'pickled', hence 'embalmed'); on the frequent conflation of these two verbs in later Latin texts, see Stotz, *Handbuch*, IV, p. 190 (§VIII. 108. 6).

⁶⁶ Translating *acroterium* (Moretti's conjecture) rather than Delehaye's *illum locum ubi iactatum fuerat*, the reading of the Egerton manuscript, and an obvious banalization of an unusual word.

been cut off that very hour, and taking it home, he reunited it with the body. And St Zoilus, on the thirtieth day after recovering the body, himself passed to God, in this way: he recalled that St Chrysogonus had appeared to him in a vision, saying: 'The utterly wicked Diocletian will have Agape, Chionia, and Irene arrested within nine days; before the Lord has them proceed to their crown, He will have them receive the solace of His servant Anastasia. But as for you, because you pleased the Lord well, come joyfully, old man, and rest with the saints.' Accordingly, when St Zoilus had related all this, Anastasia immediately went into the house which she had never before entered, and said: 'Where are my sisters whom my lord Chrysogonus commended to me?' And seeing her they rejoiced in Christ; and showing her the place where the martyr Chrysogonus was buried, they asked her to remain with them for a little while. But she, after spending a single night with them, went back to the city of Aquileia, being somewhat anxious about those who were kept in chains. When she left, St Zoilus passed on to the Lord. St Chrysogonus was decapitated on 24 November, and placed in his coffin by Zoilus the priest on the 27th of the same month.⁶⁷ I pass over the other deeds of these saints because of their excessive length, and, by relating at one time and another those of her friends, I (shall) arrive at the death of Anastasia herself.

10. When Diocletian heard the rumour concerning SS. Chionia, Irene, and Agape, he ordered them to be brought into his presence. When the king⁶⁸ saw them, he said: 'What stupidity commands you to follow an inane and superfluous superstition, and, in contempt of the true religion, to execrate the divine powers? Accordingly, because I have discovered that you are well-born and descended from a noble family, I shall provide you with husbands from my own palace, through whom you can be illustrious (*illustres*)⁶⁹—if you will deny that your God is Christ, and make offerings to the gods.' Then Agape replied: 'Most reverend emperor, the care of peoples is incumbent on you, as is care of the state and care of the army; and (yet) you speak in insulting terms of the true God, Whose support is necessary for you, Whose goodness preserves you.' Diocletian said: 'This woman is mad; bring in another.' And when

⁶⁷ St Chrysogonus is commemorated on 24 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III, p. 657), where the site of his martyrdom is given as Rome (*Romae natale Chrysogoni*). He was in fact martyred at Aquileia, as the *passio* says, but he is commemorated as a Roman martyr because of the important *titulus*-church of that name in the Trastevere; see p. 56. On the church and martyrs of Aquileia, see *DACL* I/2, cols. 2654–91 [H. Leclercq], with discussion of St Chrysogonus at col. 2677; A. Niero, 'I martiri aquileiesi', *Antichità altoadriatiche*, XXII: *Aquileia nel IV secolo* (Udine, 1982), pp. 151–74, with discussion of Chrysogonus at pp. 159–64; and G. Cuscito, *Martiri cristiani ad Aquileia e in Istria* (Udine, 1992), pp. 17–80, with discussion of Chrysogonus at pp. 65–80.

⁶⁸ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32), and n. 60.

⁶⁹ The rank *illustis* was the highest rank of the senatorial order; on this (and the two lower senatorial ranks of *spectabilis* and *clarissimus*), see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9.

Chionia had been brought in, she said: 'My sister is not mad, but with just judgement she censures these unjust imputations.' Ordering her to be removed, he ordered the third, younger, (sister), named Irene, to be brought in. To whom he said: 'Because your elder sisters are filled with vanity, may you at least, who are known to be younger, bow your neck to the gods, so that your sisters too may be liberated by your example.' Irene replied: 'Let those people with whom God is angered bow their necks to the idols. There is no worse indignity than that someone should adore this (idol), which, before it came into being, was designed by a sculptor. For unless you agree beforehand with the sculptor—who will create it standing or sitting or laughing or weeping or dancing or lying down—you do not pay a fee to those (persons) filing, hewing, (and) melting (it). Yet after you have made out of metal an image which you designed beforehand, you bow your neck to it, and believe this god of yours to be your servant, whom you yourself despised before it came into being from metal, and rejected (if it was) badly made, and purchased (if it was) suitably polished.'⁷⁰

11. Diocletian said: 'These words are to be expunged by means of torture, if perchance you refuse to obey my peaceful urgings.' Chionia said: 'Do not say "perchance": we know for certain that we are never going to offer our agreement to your commands in any way.' Then Diocletian ordered them to be committed to the safekeeping of a prison; the blessed Anastasia did not abandon them day or night. For all needy Christians, both men and women, were coming to Anastasia, because at that time Christians were suffering extreme penury. It was not permitted for any Christian to possess (anything), or to practise any skill, or to conduct any business. But Anastasia daily asked this of the Lord, that she should not leave the body before she had spent the entire sum which she had received from the sale of her patrimony.

12. With Diocletian setting off for Macedonia,⁷¹ therefore, all the Christians who were in chains were taken along by those guarding them. Among them were Agape, Chionia, and Irene. Accordingly, when the emperor was informed concerning those who were being detained in the cells, he ordered Dulcitius, the governor (*praeses*),⁷² to afflict with various kinds of tortures all

⁷⁰ Cf. Wisd. 13: 10–15 and Isa. 44: 9–20.

⁷¹ Barnes, *The New Empire*, sets out all the available evidence for Diocletian's movements, including stays in and especially passage through Macedonia (pp. 49–56).

⁷² The provinces were ruled by governors of various ranks and titles—proconsuls, consulars, *correctores*, and *praesides* (see Jones, *LRE*, p. 373; on *praesides* in particular, see Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, pp. 234–5, 337–9). In the case of Macedonia proper, according to the *Notitia dignitatum*, the governor was a consular, but in the case of the smaller province of Macedonia Salutaris, a *praeses* (see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1456; but note that the post was filled by a *praeses* for a very brief period, c.386–c.412: Jones, *ibid.* p. 1420). If any reliance can be placed on this author's narrative, Dulcitius—who is described as a *praeses*—is to be understood as the governor of Macedonia Salutaris rather than of Macedonia proper; but this is probably to expect too much concern with historical accuracy from the author of a *passio*. A person named

those who did not wish to sacrifice; for those who did agree (to sacrifice), he decreed that they be exalted with riches and honours. But because it is a lengthy affair to describe the deeds of the many martyrs of God, let us (simply) record the appearance of the three sisters as they were presented to the governor Dulcitus. Dulcitus, on seeing them, was captivated by their appearance, (and) was motivated by foul thoughts, and had them handed over to be guarded in the house of an attendant; he promised them their freedom if they would offer their agreement to his perverse intention. Therefore, since they would not change their minds either with his good promises or evil threats, the shameful governor dared to go out in the silence of the night, and to enter the cell where they were spending a sleepless night in prayers to Christ. In the place in which they were imprisoned, all the cooking utensils for the kitchen were kept. Therefore, when he had entered, and wished to go where the sound of psalms drove him, as if with three goads, his mind was overcome with delirium, (and he) began to embrace the pots and to kiss the frying-pans; deluded for some time by this activity, he became as black as a cooking-pot, and began in his clothing and appearance to be exactly as he was possessed by the devil in his mind. He eventually went back out to those who were waiting for him with lanterns. On seeing him blackened like a cooking-pot, with no part of his clothing that was not defiled, they all fled. The devil was completely unable to effect through him [Dulcitus] any curb on the handmaidens of God standing there and chanting psalms.

13. And so the governor, seeing that he was despised and abandoned by his officials, and not knowing what had happened to them, did not return to his own house, but began with swift course to go to the palace, saying: 'I shall prostrate myself before the unconquerable emperors, and shall say that I have been treated as a laughing-stock by my officials, and abandoned by them with scorn and hostility.' When the palace was opened at first light, and he, totally blackened, appeared before the court and wished to go inside, some people struck him with birches, others with their fists; some blew in his face,⁷³ and

Dulcitus is listed as *praeses* in Macedonia in *PLRE* I, p. 273 (but the source of this information is the present *passio*, and is therefore unreliable). No governor (*praeses*) of this name is listed in Thomasson, *Laterculi praesidum*, I, pp. 179–88 (Macedonia), and III, p. 101 (general index of *praesides*).

⁷³ The people 'blew in the face' of Dulcitus (*exsufflantes in faciem eius*) because they believed him to be possessed by a demon; and apparently this was an accepted method of expelling demons. Cf. Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei* viii. 4 (speaking of the Jews' reviling Christ): 'Iudaeorum odia comprobantur in Christum, cum dicebant ad eum: "Samaritanus es tu et daemonium habes" (John 8: 48), cum inridebant, cum maledicebant, cum insufflabant in faciem eius et frendebant dentibus super caput eius' (*PL* LIII, col. 156). The same practice was taken over into the Christian rite of exorcism of catechumens preceding baptism. See the *Epistula ad Senarium* [*CPL* 950] by John the Deacon (subsequently Pope John I (523–6)), ed. *PL* LIX, cols. 399–408, at 402, explaining the exorcism of the catechumen: 'exsufflatus igitur exorcizatur, ut, fugato diabolo, Christo Deo nostro pareatur introitus', and the instruction to the priest in the

others were laughing, others were driving him away in anger. (His own) slaves could scarcely take him into his own house, saying to him: 'Look at yourself!' For the devil had closed his eyes and he was unable to see himself: indeed it seemed to him that the entire world was approaching him dressed in snowy-white garments. His entire household, whether his wife or his female slaves, came to meet him with their hair dishevelled.⁷⁴ It was said that, having been struck by a demon, he was not in his right mind. For he had not been in his right mind when he embraced the pots and frying-pans; moreover, at the time when he was abandoned by his officials, he was despised by everyone, and was also mourned by his own (household); his mind was sane, but his eyes alone were controlled by Satan, (eyes) with which the wretch had offended when he looked at God's martyrs with the obscene intention of his imagination.

14. Meanwhile, after the devil had recalled him from his madness, thinking that these things had happened to him through enchantments of the handmaidens of Christ, he ordered that a public tribunal be set up for him. And when they were brought in praying and singing psalms, he ordered them to be stripped, so that he could gaze on their naked bodies. But when hands were stretched out to strip them, their clothing was so firmly attached to them that the very garments were thought to be their skin. Being frantically intent on his desires (to see them naked), Dulcitius the governor fell asleep while sitting in the tribunal, and he slept so soundly, snoring, that he could not be awakened by those who were prodding him. He was removed from there in a sedan-chair, and only woke up when he was taken into his home.

15. Hearing of all the things which had happened, the emperor appointed Count (*comes*) Sisinnius,⁷⁵ who was to hear their case. When they had been brought before him, he called out one of them and said to her: 'What is your name?' She replied: 'I am called Irene.' Sisinnius said: 'Do you consent to the royal command?' Irene replied: 'I do not consent. For I am a Christian and a handmaiden of Almighty God.' Then Sisinnius ordered her to be confined to prison. And when Chionia and Agape were brought in, he said to them: 'Irene, so it appears, is younger than you, and, deceived by your example and teaching, scorns divine commands. I accordingly dismissed her, so that,

Gelasian Sacramentary: 'Post haec facis eum caticuminum: *exsufflas in faciem eius*.' The rite is not, however, mentioned by either Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne*, or by Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom'.

⁷⁴ The dishevelled hair implies that the household have entered into mourning for the death of Dulcitius.

⁷⁵ Sisinnius as 'count' (*comes*), that is, a member of the imperial court (*consistorium*), replaces Dulcitius as governor. Unfortunately the author does not specify what magistracy or rank this *comes* held, i.e. whether he was *primi*, *secundi*, or *tertii ordinis* (on these ranks, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 526–8, 530, 548–9, and 556, as well as Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 33–7). Ammianus Marcellinus often uses the designation *comes* without further specification (e.g. *Res gestae* xxvii. 7. 5, xxviii. 6. 6 and 16, xxix. 5. 2), as here. In any case, no person named Sisinnius is listed in *PLRE*.

terrified by your death, she could be released. Therefore offer sacrifices to the gods, just as we do who are obedient to our kings.' Agape replied: 'Our faith is unconquerable.' Sisinnius says: 'What do you say, Chionia?' She replied: 'Our faith remains unalterable.' Sisinnius said: 'Are there any Christian books in your possession?'⁷⁶ They replied: 'There are books, but they are hidden away in our minds; whence they can never be removed by the enemies of Christ.' Sisinnius said: 'Who advised you to come to this misfortune?' The hand-maidens of God replied: 'This misfortune is temporary, but out of this misfortune is born everlasting glory.' Sisinnius said: 'Obey the command of the king and sacrifice.' Agape and Chionia replied: 'We offer to God the sacrifice of our praise every day. But we never sacrifice to the devil. Do not persuade yourself that you can tear us away from worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. That understanding is foolish which does not realize that we cannot turn away from our faith in Christ. Whence fulfil what has been commanded of you so that, just as we keep the commands of Our King, you may keep the commands of your emperor, so that you can find favour with him.'

16. Then Sisinnius gave his sentence, saying: 'I command that Agape and Chionia, who did not wish to obey the orders of the emperors even under judicial torture, be burned alive.' On hearing this Chionia and Agape were filled with joy, saying in a clear voice: 'We give thanks to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who deigned to grant us steadfastness in the confession of Your name. Take our souls, O Lord, into Your hands.'⁷⁷ And when they had said this, the soldiers put them in the flames. In the fire, while even their clothing was not burning thoroughly, they were praying to the Lord, shouting out and saying: 'Lord Jesus, do not from this hour forth allow us even to speak to those who deny that You are the True God.' And having said this, they cast themselves down in prayer, untouched by the flames, and thus passed to the Lord. And so that God could reveal to unbelievers that the fire had not killed them with its flames, but that they had brought about their deaths by their prayers, they were found with their bodies unblemished, their hair intact, and their clothing spotless when the fire went out. Their bodies were stealthily recovered by men who had been secretly dispatched by Anastasia, and were taken to her guest chambers. With utter joy she buried them in a new sarcophagus with spices and a funeral fitting for martyrs, praying to the Lord that she (herself) would be found worthy to be made their companion.

17. The next day Sisinnius ordered the third sister to be brought before him. He said to her: 'Irene, sacrifice to the gods so that you do not perish in a

⁷⁶ The First Edict of Persecution, issued at the outset of the so-called 'Great Persecution' on 23 February 303, stipulated that all copies of the scriptures and other liturgical books were to be surrendered and burned: see Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, pp. 179–81, and De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 35–6, and see also pp. 46–7 for commentary on this detail in the (Greek) text of the *passio* of SS. Agape, Chionia, and Irene (BHG 34).

⁷⁷ Cf. Luke 23: 46, and Acts 7: 58.

similar fire.' She replied: 'I do not sacrifice, but I hasten to become the partner of my sisters so that, with my sisters standing in the sight of God, I am not found to be distanced from them.' Sisinnius said: 'Convince yourself (to sacrifice), so that you do not experience greater torments than those (women) whom you call your sisters suffered.' Irene replied: 'I hasten to this, in not denying the truth: to attain life through death and through fire to reach consolation.' Sisinnius said: 'Do you suppose that you are (merely) to suffer as your sisters suffered? I shall order you to be handed over naked to prostitutes, so that, being put to disgusting uses, you may die there.'⁷⁸ Irene replied: 'My flesh, which would suffer from wild beasts and fire and whippings and all other tortures, will thus tolerate a fornicator, just as (it would tolerate) a wild dog, a bear, a serpent. And it is better for me that my flesh be consigned to those punishments and injuries (which) you have dreamed up, than that my soul be polluted by idols. For the soul does not acquire guilt from the filth to which it does not consent. Are God's saints, persevering hitherto in confession of God's name, not polluted by unwillingly taking into their mouths the blood from your sacrifices?' Sisinnius said: 'And are those who have tasted sacrificial blood not therefore polluted?' Irene said: 'Not only are they not polluted, they are even crowned. The will has its own punishment, and necessity gives rise to the crown. You ordered them to recant and unwillingly to swallow sacrificial blood mixed with water, and you poured it into their open mouths from a horn as is done with horses. If they consented to swallowing that blood, they had lost their souls; but if in tasting it they did not offer their consent but had it forced upon them, not only are they not polluted but are even purified. Thus I, who have given my flesh to Christ, will not give my consent, whether you consign it to filth or beatings or fires, and I shall not fear anything I shall suffer because of my confession of my Lord. God, however, is mighty enough to prevent you from doing what you have devised.'

18. Then he called soldiers to him and handed her over to them, saying: 'Go and put her in a foul place where she may be purchased [as a prostitute], so that she may be a laughing-stock to everyone there.' Then when Irene was being led away, two soldiers appeared in front of those who were escorting her, saying: 'Count Sisinnius sent us after you, so that we may show you where to

⁷⁸ The enforced prostitution of virgins is a common topos in *passiones* (cf. most notably, the *passio* of St Agnes, XVII.8–9), and is a literary reflex of what was probably common legal practice during the later Roman empire; see Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, p. 53 (with mention of St Irene), as well as Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, esp. pp. 25–56 ('Le vergini cristiane condannate allo stupro dai magistrati romani'), and Rizzo Nervo, 'La vergine e il lupanare', pp. 91–9, with discussion of St Agnes and other *passiones* at 93–6. There is a detailed study of prostitution in late antiquity by H. Herter, 'Die Soziologie der antiken Prostitution im Lichte des heidnischen und christlichen Schrifttums', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 3 (1960), 70–111, with discussion of legally enforced prostitution at pp. 106–9 (but no mention of the late antique *passiones martyrum*).

put her.' And the soldiers started to follow them until they climbed to the summit of a mountain; and the soldiers sat down and said to them: 'Go and announce that "Just as you commanded we have made her stand at the summit of a mountain".' Then Sisinnius, seeing that he had been tricked and that what was done was not what he had ordered, mounted a horse and rode swiftly to the mountain on which Irene, God's handmaiden, was praying; and, keeping her in his sight, he rode around and around from morning to night, and did not reach her. Then he moaned, realizing that he was a laughing-stock. Then one of those (soldiers) who had come with him took out his bow and shot her with an arrow. And she spoke out, saying: 'I taunt you, wretch, because you have attacked a woman whom you wished to subjugate as if she were a mighty opponent in battle. Behold, I go in a state of purity to my Lord Jesus Christ, Who now returns me to my sisters, because they refused to remain without me.' And having said this she yielded up her spirit.⁷⁹ Thereupon her body was taken away by Anastasia's men and placed with (those of) her sisters. Agape and Chionia were martyred in Thessalonica on 2 April, and Irene on 5 April, during the eighth consulship of Maximian [AD 304].

19. With the emperor Diocletian returning from Macedonia to *Sirmium*,⁸⁰ Theodota was presented to him along with her three sons; she was a native of Bithynia but a citizen of Nicaea, and had fled from her city because a violent persecution of all Christians was being enacted there.⁸¹ Count (*comes*) Leucadius,⁸² who had handed her over, made a request from the emperor, saying: 'Command that she be given to me as wife; if she will not consent to sacrifice with me, I shall kill her with various punishments.' Having been given the authority, he began to pester her with diabolical arguments and threats. But she said to him: 'If you have sought to have me as wife so that you may gain access to all my measly property, here is everything I own: go and seize it.

⁷⁹ Matt. 27: 50.

⁸⁰ *Sirmium* was located on the river Sava in Pannonia, and was the site of an imperial residence, mint, and arms factory; it corresponds to the town of Sremska Mitrovica in present-day Serbia. See *Sirmium. Archaeological Investigations in Sirmian Pannonia*, ed. V. Popović and E. L. Ochsenchlager (Belgrade, 1971—[in progress]), as well as E. L. Ochsenchlager and V. Popović, 'Excavations at Sirmium, Yugoslavia', *Archaeology* 26 (1973), 85–93 (with illustrations of the 1969 excavations of the imperial palace), and D. Bosković, N. Duval, P. Gros and V. Popović, 'Recherches archéologiques à Sirmium. Campagne Franco-Yougoslave de 1973', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 86 (1974), 597–656, with discussion of the imperial palace at pp. 616–19. None of the reports contains any mention of a 'capitol' (*capitolium*) in *Sirmium* (see n. 94).

⁸¹ The so-called 'Great Persecution' began at Nicomedia in Bithynia, on 23 February 303 (when the church opposite the imperial palace was demolished) and entailed numerous martyrdoms in that city, especially in the early phases: see Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* viii. 6. 6–9.

⁸² Again, the author does not specify the rank of this *comes* (see n. 75); we learn from the sequel (c. 29) that he was highly placed in the administration of Bithynia. No person named Leucadius is listed in *PLRE*.

When you return, you shall have me as your wife.' He departed, and Theodota, remaining in one mind with Anastasia, attended daily to the care of the saints [i.e. the Christian poor], as Anastasia was doing. For she had learned from her to be concerned as a mother is for her children, and she daily healed the wounds of the saints, consoled those in sadness, comforted those in doubt, strengthened the fearful, bolstered the anxious. The concern of Anastasia and Theodota was nothing other than that they should see to the care of those who for the name of Christ were being held variously in chains.

20. Then, when it was revealed to Diocletian the emperor that there was a multitude of Christians in prison, he ordered that all of them should be killed on the same day, (but that) whoever wished to sacrifice should be enriched with honours and wealth. When those who had been sent arrived, they seized all the saints and led them off, throwing some of them in the river, killing others with the sword: they destroyed them all with various tortures. The blessed Anastasia, being unaware of what had happened the previous night, set out in her usual manner to circulate amongst the various prisons; when she found none of them there, she began to weep uncontrollably. When some people saw her weeping, they say to her: 'Why are you crying?' And she replied: 'I am looking for the servants of God, His confessors, who were being kept in chains, and I do not know where they took them.' They said to her: 'And are you therefore a Christian?' Replying to them undaunted she said: 'I am a Christian.' Then one of them took her in custody to the forum where the (praetorian) prefect of *Illyricum* was sitting (in tribunal) to hear various cases.⁸³ He [the informer]⁸⁴ presented her to him [the prefect] as he stood up: 'I found this woman weeping next to the prison. When I asked her why she was weeping, she said that she was looking for certain Christians. And when I heard this I asked if she herself were a Christian. When, undaunted, she did not deny this at all, I seized her and brought her loyally to your Magnificence.'

21. On hearing this, Probus⁸⁵ interrogated her, saying: 'What is your name?' She replied: 'Anastasia'. Probus said: 'Is it true, as he [the informer]

⁸³ On the praetorian prefect of *Illyricum*, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 370–1. Originally (from the time of Constantine) there were three praetorian prefectures: of the Gauls (Britain and Spain, plus the two Gallic dioceses), Italy (including Africa, Pannonia, Dacia, and Macedonia), and the East (Thrace, Asiana, Pontica, and Oriens). Sometimes the large central prefecture was split into two, so as to embrace the diocese of *Illyricum* (as here), and that of Italy (including Africa).

⁸⁴ The author does not name the person who betrayed Anastasia to the praetorian prefect; presumably he was simply an informer (*delator*) who, if the prosecution against her was successful, would stand to gain a quarter of her property (Suetonius, *Nero*, x. 2: 'praemia delatorum Papiæ legis ad quartas redegit'; cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* iv. 20: 'M. Lepidus quartam accusatoribus secundum necessitudinem legis'). On the legal implications of delation, see O'Neal, 'Delation in the early Empire'; Spagnuolo Vigorita, *Exsecranda perniciēs*, pp. 183–209 *et passim*; and (briefly) Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, pp. 8 and 99–100.

⁸⁵ There was a famous praetorian prefect of *Illyricum* named Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus during the reign of Valentinian I (364–75), who is discussed by Ammianus Marcellinus,

asserts, that you are a Christian?’ Anastasia said: ‘I am a Christian, and do not confess myself to be anything else.’ Probus said: ‘From whence have you come here?’ Anastasia said, ‘I am a citizen of the City.’ Probus said: ‘And how have you managed to come here from Rome?’ Anastasia replied: ‘Having great love of Christ, I sold all my property at His request, and followed Him.’ Probus said: ‘And where is Christ?’ Anastasia said: ‘In heaven, at the right hand of the Father; but on earth, wherever His saints are to be found.’ Probus said: ‘And where are His saints?’ Anastasia said: ‘Up until today they were here.’ Probus said: ‘And they are not now here, therefore?’ Anastasia said: ‘They are not here in body, because you have removed them.’ Probus said: ‘Who are these people whom I have removed?’ Anastasia said: ‘The innocents and the saintly and those worshipping God, who were placed in chains. I cared for them with loving care; I helped them, so that no one would lack anything: I supported those whom I saw to be hesitant, I consoled those whom I saw to be sad. And suddenly, those whom I helped continually for a year and several months, abandoned me last night, and through the triumph of martyrdom have travelled to the heavenly kingdom. Seeing therefore that I remain so that there is no one for whom I should show myself, but should rather hide myself, I was led by devout envy concerning them, because they now reign with the Lord, and here I stand, ready to console those in custody who are to suffer (martyrdom) for the sacred name.’

22. Probus said: ‘As I see it, tortures are to be prepared for you (that are) not trifling. For you have called back to sacrilege the minds of those who had decided to obey the royal injunctions.’ Anastasia replied: ‘I used to kiss the feet of those exhausted by suffering, so that they would not succumb to the pain. For as long as I had a substantial sum of gold, I spent it on their needs. But now that I have spent it all, I have prepared my soul for martyrdom, judging it appropriate that I should somehow rejoin those who have left me.’ Probus said: ‘Because the gods did not agree that you, a profane person, should be concealed any longer, they themselves brought it about that you should incriminate yourself with your own words.’ Anastasia said: ‘I am driven by envy of those in whom the words of my Lord Jesus Christ are fulfilled: “The first shall be last, and the last first”.⁸⁶ For those who were later than me in faith, are made earlier than me in attaining to the palm of martyrdom.’ Probus said: ‘You are mad, woman, and, so it seems, you appear to me to be of noble kin.’ Anastasia said: ‘If I were to gloat over my carnal father I would not say, “I am the handmaiden of Christ”, but would say, “I am the daughter of Praetextatus”.’

Res gestae xxvii. 11; see *PLRE* I, pp. 736–40, and J. F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 186–7 and 195–7.

⁸⁶ Matt. 19: 30, 20: 16; and Mark 10: 31.

23. Probus, on hearing that she was the daughter of Praetextatus, ordered the small group of household slaves accompanying her to be arrested, and, ascertaining from them that it was so, he reported to the emperor concerning her, saying that the daughter of the senator Praetextatus was so deceived by the Christians that she willingly wished to be killed for the name of Christ. On hearing this Diocletian ordered that she be vigilantly guarded. For he said that the news had reached his ears that she had sold an immense patrimony. And so the following day Probus ordered her to be brought into his private chambers. Asking her what she had done with the money from the property she had sold,⁸⁷ she replied, saying: 'If I still had anything left which I could spend, I would not reveal it to those persecuting me. But because everything has already been spent, I hasten confidently to Christ. It was not fitting that the devil should seize anything of my possessions through his agents.' And, entrusting the trial (*cognitio*)⁸⁸ to Probus, Diocletian departed.

24. Then Probus said to Anastasia: 'The gods and goddesses of which your father Praetextatus was a worshipper—you ought to worship them and not worship some Christ, a Jew who was killed by his own fellow-citizens.' Anastasia said: 'I always did worship the gods and goddesses of my father and, if I had not worshipped them well, I would not today have arrived at the confession of His holy name.' Probus said: 'And if you did worship them, why have you abandoned this worship?' Anastasia said: 'I did not abandon (them), nor do I abandon them.' Probus said: 'Therefore you worship the gods and goddesses of your father?' Anastasia said: 'I worship them to the extent that I may free them from all injury. And so when the spiders weave their webs on them, and birds defecate on them, and mice have their offspring in them,⁸⁹ I have freed them and, melting them down, have converted them into money (*pecuniam*).'⁹⁰ Probus said: 'My ears cannot listen to this sacrilege!' Then the blessed Anastasia said, smiling, 'I admire your wisdom, as if you were afraid of the sacrilege (involved) in breaking stones, burning wood, melting bronze artefacts. To be sure, if you think that there is some divinity present in these pointless idols, give me authority of destroying them, and I, in destroying them, will suffer something from them and not from you, whom no one is touching. If you believe them to be living gods, you will see that they can

⁸⁷ Probus apparently has his eye on her property because, if she were condemned as a criminal, her property, as *bona damnatorum*, would be confiscated by the imperial treasury (*res privata*); see Jones, *LRE* pp. 421–3.

⁸⁸ The technical term for a trial before a magistrate such as a praetorian prefect or a provincial governor was *cognitio* (on which see inter alia Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, pp. 7–14). Although all the Roman *passiones martyrum* involve trials before magistrates, this is one of the very rare occasions where the technical term *cognitio* is used.

⁸⁹ Cf. the *passio* of St Caecilia (below, IV.10).

⁹⁰ This must mean that she sold the metal for cash; it can hardly mean that she used the metal to mint coins, a procedure which was criminalized under Constantine, and was severely punished; see Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, pp. 86–8.

neither feel nor move.⁹¹ But if they are propitious, and are not enraged even when they are melted down in flames, you who worship them are acting against them when you do not imitate them. And just as they remain patiently silent when they are broken up, and say nothing when they are melted down, so it would be fitting for you to remain silent, lest you do something which your gods do not wish to happen.'

25. Probus said: 'Our lords, the unconquerable emperors, ordered that you either sacrifice to the gods or, as is fitting for a blasphemer, that you die by various tortures.' Anastasia said: 'Do not say "die". For to die for the name of God is to reign (forever).' Probus said: 'Cast off this vanity and come to your senses.' Anastasia said: 'The Apostle Paul taught us, saying: "He who wishes to be wise in this world, let him become a fool in order that he be wise".⁹² I have the wisdom of God, which is foolishness among men.' Probus said: 'You are suffering from insanity.' Anastasia said: 'Who is suffering from insanity?— I who accuse you of foolishness, or you who cannot give me a rational explanation?' Probus said: 'I lament that you are deceived, believing in these pointless arguments.' Anastasia said: 'I lament that, puffed up with empty authority, you fear a man more than God.' Probus said: 'Sacrifice to the gods, so that you may return rejoicing to your own city.' Anastasia said, 'I have a city "which is eternal, not made by human hands, in the heavens";⁹³ I seek to journey to it.' And while these and similar matters, having been discussed by both of them, were recorded in writing, the prefect read the proceedings to the emperor. Diocletian began to rage and to seek advice about what should be done.

26. A certain man who was called Ulpian, who was the high priest (*summus pontifex*) at the Capitol,⁹⁴ presented himself to him, (and said) that he wished to marry her, and wished her to be given to him; if she would not agree to this, he would take possession of her property and would have the authority to kill

⁹¹ Cf. Ps. 113: 12–16, and 134: 15–18.

⁹² I Cor. 3: 18.

⁹³ II Cor. 5: 1.

⁹⁴ The *Capitolium* was the southern crest of the *Capitolinus mons* in Rome, now covered by the Palazzo dei Conservatori: see Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom* I/2, pp. 1–154; Platner–Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, pp. 95–8; Richardson, pp. 68–70; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 229–41; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 32–41; C. Reusser, 'Capitolium (Republik und Kaiserzeit)', *LTUR* I, pp. 232–3, and G. De Spirito, 'Capitolium (in fonti agiografiche)', *ibid.* p. 234 (who does not mention the present passage), and above, n. 25. As *summus pontifex*, this Ulpian is being envisaged as the high priest of the temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, the principal temple on the Capitol (Platner–Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, pp. 297–302); it was still standing (after many fires and rebuildings) in the fourth century, and is described by Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xvi. 10. 14, xxii. 16. 12. No *summus pontifex* named Ulpian is recorded in *PLRE* (the name inevitably recalls that of the great Severan jurist). On the office, see M. W. Hoffman Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome 16 (Rome, 1955), esp. pp. 28–37 (lists of identifiable *pontifices*) and 68–80 (on the priestly college of *pontifices*). Ulpian is portrayed as being the head (*summus*) of a college of *pontifices* which, under Augustus and Tiberius, numbered twenty-five members (the *pontifex maximus* was of course the emperor himself).

her. This proposal pleased the emperor, and in accordance with this plan Anastasia was handed over to Ulpian. Taking her back to his home,⁹⁵ he began to show her ornaments—and his sword; jewels—and staves; silver—and the rack; silver beds strewn with feathers—and burning coals; precious robes—and shackles, dining-rooms laid out with feasts—and a darkened room strewn with sharp shards of pottery. Then Anastasia said, rejoicing and brimming with confidence: ‘In this room, which you think is darkened, I see the true Light. For in your dining-rooms I see nothing but heaps of excrement, in your gold there is a serpent, in your jewels the devil, in your silver beds wantonness resides. If you place these iron shackles on my neck, my youth will be renewed like the eagle’s,’⁹⁶ and I will seem to be adorned as with a necklace in order to please Christ, in Whose love I breathe by day and night.’

27. Then Ulpian said to her: ‘I shall grant you a postponement of three days so that you can reflect. On the fourth day, I shall either have you as my wife, or various tortures will claim you.’ Anastasia said: ‘Consider that the third day has passed: you should know that I would rather choose the tortures, through which I shall go to Him Whom I love.’ Ulpian said: ‘And who is this whom you love?’ Anastasia said: ‘Christ, the Son of God.’ Ulpian said: ‘May you cause his death!’ Anastasia said: ‘Amen’. Ulpian said: ‘What is this “Amen”?’ Anastasia said, ‘You are unworthy to have any understanding of this word.’ Ulpian said: ‘Be kind to yourself.’ And he sent her to (the residence of) ten neighbouring women, related to her by kin: some of them kissed her knees, others her feet, others her hands, others offered her perfumes, others jewels, others gifts and various kinds of food. But Anastasia, fixing her eyes on Heaven, stood for that three-day period in prayer with her hands extended; she neither ate nor drank, she neither sat down nor slept even lightly. When the third day had passed, Ulpian came to them, asking if they had been able to achieve anything. They replied, saying: ‘Scorning our words as if they were those of squawking crows, she directed her gaze to the heavens, and from that hour at which you sent her to us, she remained with her hands extended, without food, without drink, without sleep. But if you wish to do something, go and use her as is fitting for a man to do, and do not stand there and approach her with soothing words.’

28. Then on entering Ulpian approached her, wishing to embrace her, and he was struck blind, and he circled around the entire room in which God’s handmaiden was praying. From the third hour of the day [9:00 a.m.] until evening he circled about, blind, calling on Jupiter, Juno, Minerva [i.e. the Capitoline triad], and saying, ‘O gods, free me!’, and he was ashamed to shout

⁹⁵ If Ulpian was the *summus pontifex* of the *Capitolium* in Rome, his residence was presumably in Rome as well; if so, we are presumably to understand that he has taken Anastasia from *Sirmium* in Pannonia all the way back to Rome.

⁹⁶ Ps. 102: 5.

out. At length the eyes which had been blinded began to be afflicted with intense pain. Then he began to shout out to those who were waiting for him outside. Entering, they see Anastasia praying, and him lifeless and blind. And carrying him in their hands back to his house, they cursed openly and publicly the emperor through whose orders Anastasia had come to their house. Therefore, when midnight came, Ulpian asked to be taken to the Capitol and, like a great high priest, began to ask through the religious observances of his sacrifices, whether he could escape (from his blindness). His demons replied to him: 'Because you afflicted God's servant Anastasia, you have been consigned to us. From this day forth you shall always be with us in hell.' On hearing this Ulpian was distressed, and when they took him to his home, he breathed his last in the hands of his slave boys. Anastasia, leaving the house [of Ulpian] after these events, went to the house of Theodota⁹⁷ and related to her everything which the Lord had accomplished.

29. Accordingly, when they had spent several days together praising God, Count Leucadius, arriving from Bithynia, began to urge that Theodota be joined to him in matrimony. When he had pressed his case with blandishments and threats for many days, and the saintly Theodota would in no wise agree to this, he learned that St Anastasia was being hidden secretly in her [Theodota's] house. He handed Anastasia over to a judge (*iudex*), but he sent Theodota, bound in iron and with her three sons, back to the consular (*consularis*) in Bithynia [i.e. the governor],⁹⁸ saying: 'On the authority of the Augustus I accepted this woman, on the condition that if she would sacrifice, I would join her to me in marriage, but if she were to repudiate the ceremonies, she would perish under various kinds of torture.' Then at her hearing Nicetius the consular said: 'Theodota, listen to me and sacrifice, together with your sons, so that you do not come with them to a bad end.' Theodota said: 'I shall not sacrifice to demons lest I *do* come to a bad end!' Nicetius the consular said: 'If your heart is iron, and you ill-advisedly will not spare yourself, at least have mercy on your three sons and be merciful to them if you have decided to be unmerciful to yourself.' Theodota replied: 'God, Who gave them to me, will receive them, if they should bravely scorn the tortures and should, by rejecting the world, seek to reach the heavens, from where death will never separate them, disease will never take them.' Nicetius the consular said: 'Be mindful of

⁹⁷ As we have seen (c. 19) Theodota—who was a citizen of Nicaea in Bithynia—apparently had a residence in *Sirmium*, where she was presented to Diocletian, who was in residence there. Are we to understand that Theodota also had a residence in Rome? Or has the author overlooked the fact that Ulpian brought Anastasia back with him from *Sirmium* to Rome? Or is Ulpian's residence, and the trial of Anastasia, imagined as taking place in *Sirmium*? On the problems with such a scenario, above all the fact that there was no *Capitolium* in *Sirmium*, see n. 80.

⁹⁸ According to the *Notitia dignitatum*, the governor of Bithynia was a consular (Jones, *LRE*, p. 1458). The consular (*consularis*), a post created by Constantine, was a senator of *clarissimus* rank. No person named Nicetius is attested in *PLRE*.

yourself, and persuade your sons, so that you may escape the tortures and obtain with them the king's friendship.' Theodota replied: 'Let whoever does not wish to be the friend of Christ obtain the friendship of this emperor. You may be certain that I and my sons shall never consent to your counsel.'

30. Then the consular started to reveal the instruments of torture to the three sons, saying that he would inflict various wounds on them until they died. Then the first-born son, named Evodius, said: 'If tortures are to be feared, those which are inflicted by the angels of hell are to be feared; or if joys are to be sought, those which are revealed by the angels of God amongst the glades of Paradise are to be sought, where the sacred meadows are painted with flowering roses through the mysteries of (Christ's) gleaming blood.' Nicetius the consular said: 'Since you are a mere boy, when were these words implanted in you?—for a long life with lengthy contemplation would scarcely be sufficient to instil these things.' Evodius said: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ advised us, saying: "When you stand before judges on account of my name, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; it is not you who are speaking, but the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you."⁹⁹ I did not therefore speak words to you today which I had previously contemplated, but spoke the very words which God deigned to pour into my heart.' Nicetius the consular said: 'Persuade your younger brothers so that they do not die wrongly.' Evodius said: 'If there were any wisdom in you, you would not impute what we say to our ages, and would believe that Christ is the true God Whom even the innocent cannot deny. For who gave to us, still in infancy, the speech on our tongues, the commitment in our minds, the constancy in our faith? Or who expelled from our understanding the fear of men? Is it to be doubted that it is God Himself Who provides these things?'

31. Then Nicetius the consular said to the mother: 'Take counsel for yourself and your sons, so that you are not deprived of this (present) light.' Theodota replied: 'This light is shadowy to us; for we believe that we are to acquire such light that no fog will affect, no shadows will expel.' Then he had Evodius the first-born son beaten with staves in sight of his mother Theodota. The mother shouted out to him: 'Do not, my son, fear these blows; through them you will obtain the eternal joys of Christ.' Then Nicetius the consular ordered that a certain Hyrtacus be summoned, a man who was famous for his lechery, and he said to him: 'Seize this blasphemer and lead her away, and after you have played with her, put her amongst the public prostitutes,¹⁰⁰ so that we may see if Christ will defend her.' Then, when Hyrtacus went to her so that he could seize her and lead her away, there began to flow from his nostrils an infinite amount of blood. Hyrtacus shouted out to the consular, saying: 'There

⁹⁹ Matt. 10: 18–20.

¹⁰⁰ On the enforced prostitution of female criminals in brothels, see n. 78.

is an attractive young man standing next to her, clothed in golden garments, from whose hand I received a punch on the nose.' Then the consular said: 'Theodota, sacrifice, for I will have your sons executed in front of you.' Theodota said: 'This is what I desire, that I send them on before me, and I shall cheerfully follow them.' The consular said: 'I am having you all burned together in a fire.' Theodota replied: 'I give thanks to God if I shall be worthy to be a sacrifice to Him for His name.' Then, filled with the devil, Nicetius the consular ordered a great fire to be kindled, and Theodota is placed in it together with her three sons, giving thanks to God, and saying: 'Blessed is the name of Your mercy, Who in this world did not separate me from my sons, nor allowed me to be parted (from them) in the confession of Your name, nor permitted us to be divided in martyrdom.' St Theodota suffered martyrdom in the province of Bithynia, in the city of Nicaea, with her three sons, on 2 August.¹⁰¹

32. And so, as we mentioned above, St Anastasia was handed over to the prefect Lucillius under heavy guard.¹⁰² It was known to everyone that the daughter of Praetextatus, a woman of illustrious senatorial rank among Roman matrons, was being held in the custody of the prefecture, and was thought to have infinite wealth. For this reason the prefect ordered that she be brought to him in his private residence. He said to her: 'Anastasia, if you wish to be a Christian, obey the commands of your Christ and go wherever you wish.' Anastasia said: 'I hold the precepts of Christ to be more desirable than gold and precious stones and sweeter than honey of the honey-comb.'¹⁰³ The prefect Lucillius said to her: 'These are His precepts (which) say: "Whoever does not renounce everything which he possesses cannot be my disciple."¹⁰⁴ Give me everything which you have and you shall be a true disciple of Christ.' Anastasia said: 'I remember my Lord saying in the gospels, "Sell everything which you have and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me".¹⁰⁵ You are rich, and whoever shall give to you will do it against the precepts of Christ. For He did not say, "Give to the rich". This proves you to be unworthy to come to the Christians' table, when it says: "When you invite to your table people to dine with you, do not invite the rich or those who can invite you back, but invite those who are needy and wretched".¹⁰⁶ Do not lead yourself to this offence, that I be compelled to give my wealth to you, as if you were wretched and needy, in accordance with the most sacred words of the Saviour. But, if you wish, receive (from me that)

¹⁰¹ But see Delehaye, 'Quelques dates', p. 49, who identifies the three sons of Theodota, and shows that they were commemorated on 25 April and 1 September (*Martyrologium Hieronymianum*), respectively.

¹⁰² The narrative now returns to Rome, where Anastasia is handed over to the (urban) prefect Lucillius, referred to in a previous chapter (c. 29) simply as a judge (*iudex*). No prefect—urban or praetorian—named Lucillius is recorded in *PLRE*.

¹⁰³ Ps. 18: 11.

¹⁰⁴ Luke 14: 33.

¹⁰⁵ Luke 18: 22.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Luke 14: 12–13.

in respect of which I know you to be poor. For I ask you to receive those things which I know you need.'

33. Lucillius said: 'In what (respect) am I poor?' Anastasia replied: 'In faith'. Lucillius says to her: 'You, therefore, who say that you have faith: say to the mountains to move themselves, because your master says this.' Anastasia said: 'You are not a Jew: why do you require these signs from me, the least handmaiden of Christ?' Lucillius said: 'Is it appropriate to require signs from the Jews alone?' Anastasia said: 'I recall the testimony of St Paul the Apostle when he said, 'The Jews seek signs and the Greeks seek wisdom: but we preach the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was crucified'.¹⁰⁷ Lucillius said: 'And if your Lord was crucified, why do you not worship Jupiter, who never suffered any injury?' Anastasia said: 'Jupiter did harm, Christ suffered. You imitate your god, and I (shall imitate) my God.' Lucillius said: 'And is it necessary that you imitate your God?' Anastasia said: 'More than necessary.' Lucillius said: 'Meanwhile, I have revealed myself to you by flattering and challenging (you), because I learned that you were nobly born; but if I see you persevering in this obstinacy, I shall avenge you savagely.' Anastasia said: 'Begin your vengeance, because I shall confess myself to be the handmaiden of Christ for as long as I live.' Then Lucillius ordered that she be confined to the depths of prison, and to be tormented with savage tortures, but to be offered very little food in the evenings. But Anastasia utterly refused the food which was offered to her.

34. The spirit of St Theodota appeared to her at night with lanterns, and placed a table loaded with various foods before her, and they prayed together, such that Anastasia said to her: 'You have already suffered martyrdom for Christ's name: how can you come to me now?' And Theodota said to her: 'Because the Lord granted this power to His martyrs, that they reveal themselves to saints and pure persons and honest worshippers, and speak with them, and console them. And because the delights of Paradise are already prepared for you, and the entire assembly of angels rejoices in you, permission was given to me to offer consolation to you.' And, after praying together for the entire night, at cockcrow they put an end to speaking together and seeing each other. With this taking place over a period of thirty days, Lucillius, thinking that she was dying of starvation and dread of darkness, made enquiries as to whether she was still alive. When it was reported that she had become stronger than she had been, he ordered her to be brought to him. And seeing that she was more robust and more joyful, he was angry with the guards, saying that his orders had been despised. And, having changed the guards, he ordered her to be detained for another month in accordance with the previous sentence: he ordered that her cell be sealed with his own ring, wishing her to die in this confinement.

¹⁰⁷ I Cor. 1: 22-3, 2: 2.

35. And when, as we have said, she became fatter, being fed on the heavenly food brought to her by her martyred comrade, he ordered her to be put in a ship and to be drowned in the waves of the sea,¹⁰⁸ along with many others whom the laws of the land had condemned to execution.¹⁰⁹ Some of these were murderers, others were condemned for adultery, others for various acts of sacrilege, among whom there was a solitary Christian named Eutychianus, whose paternal estates had been confiscated, since he had been very rich. This man, being of an extremely innocent nature, excelled even the philosophers: for when all his possessions were taken from him, he remained silent, planning nothing and fearing nothing, except this alone, that he might lose the possessions and riches of his faith. For however often he was present at a hearing, and however often he was interrogated, he said nothing other than: 'Even he who removes my head does not take Christ away from me.' With nearly one hundred and twenty guilty persons placed in the ship and taken out on to the high seas, where a tempest was raging, they holed the ship, as they had been ordered to do, and abandoned them there. Then the (spirit of the) holy martyr Theodota appeared there and, sitting on the leaking hull, kept the ship out of danger (of sinking). Anastasia was urging everyone in the ship to believe in God, and St Theodota the martyr indicated St Eutychianus to them, saying that he was a colleague of the martyrs. Then Anastasia began to kiss his knees, saying: 'Make a prayer and let them all be baptized.' When he had prayed, at Anastasia's urging they all believed (in Christ). They remained one day and one night in the midst of the sea, in such a way that they thought they were on land—without fear, without any swelling or surge of the sea. And on the third day they landed on the islands which they call the *Palmariae* ('Isles of Palms'),¹¹⁰ on which bishops and priests and many religious men had been exiled at various times,¹¹¹ and, disembarking, they were received with hymns and psalms.

¹⁰⁸ Drowning is not a form of execution specified by Roman law (*DACL* X/2, cols. 2429–30); but cf. Eusebius, *HE* viii. 6. 6, describing events during the 'Great Persecution' (A.D. 303), when a number of Christians were placed in a boat and drowned in the depths of the sea, and esp. Prudentius, *Liber peristephanon* xi [St Hippolytus], lines 69–76, where the criminals are placed in a leaky boat (*rimosa . . . cumba*) on the assumption that, when it reaches the high seas, the timbers of the rotten structure will disintegrate (*dissociata putrem laxent tabulata carinam*) and leave the poor wretches to drown.

¹⁰⁹ The ship is apparently envisaged as embarking from *Portus* (i.e. the harbour at the mouth of the Tiber which at this time was the principal port of Rome), since after three days it has drifted down to the *Palmariae*, west of the Bay of Naples.

¹¹⁰ The *Palmariae* are a group of tiny islands—the Pontine Islands—in the Tyrrhenian Sea, 6 miles west of Ponza (i.e. west of the Bay of Naples); see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 44 (C4), as well as Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 152–3. The second largest of the Pontine Islands is today called Palmarola; it is to be distinguished from the present-day Palmaria Island in the Gulf of La Spezia, off the coast of Liguria in northern Italy.

¹¹¹ At a later time, according to the *Liber pontificalis*, Pope Silverius (536–7) was exiled to Ponza (*Pontiae*) in 537: ed. Mommsen, p. 147; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 293; trans. Davis, p. 58.

36. Fishermen were sent on the third day to various places along the shore, so they could announce to the prefect where the waves had cast up the bodies. And they reported that they had all become Christians and landed unharmed on the Pontine Islands (*Palmariae*), and were occupied by day and night in the praise of God, together with those who had been deported there. Then he sent (agents), and assembling everyone, put down gifts and unsheathed swords before their eyes, saying: 'Whoever should wish to sacrifice will be enriched and honoured. Whoever should refuse will be either decapitated or consumed by flames.'¹¹² And since there were more than two hundred men and seventy women, not counting small children—of whom not one would consent to live and agree to be called back to sacrifice—when all of them had celebrated their martyrdom by various kinds of execution, Anastasia, tied by her hands and feet to fixed stakes, had a fire kindled about her abdomen. While praying and blessing the Lord Jesus Christ in this state of suffering, she gave up the ghost. A Christian matron named Apollonia, through the offices of the wife of the prefect, was permitted to remove her body. Taking it up she kissed it, and embalming it with spices, and wrapping it in appropriate linen clothes, she buried it in the garden of her home—as was fitting for a martyr; and, at no small monetary expense, she built a basilica where she had buried her. St Anastasia suffered martyrdom on 25 December and was kept in a hidden location. She was subsequently translated to the basilica built in the house of Apollonia¹¹³ on 7 September, where the Lord provides His benefits in praise of His name up until the end of time. Amen.

¹¹² The distinction is that Roman citizens had the right to be decapitated (supposedly a more humane method of execution), whereas slaves were burned alive; see Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 125–6. In contravention of this practice, Anastasia, who is of the highest rank of the nobility (*illustris*), is burned alive (the punishment described in the laws as *vivicomburium*).

¹¹³ The location of this basilica built on the property of Apollonia is unclear. There is no recorded *titulus*-church in Rome in the name of Apollonia. There was a church of S. Apollonia in Trastevere (S. Apollonia de Oliva); but this church dates only from 1582, even if, as is possible, it was built over an earlier church of the same name (see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 538); in any event, it can hardly be identical with the basilica built by Apollonia to house the remains of St Anastasia. What is odd is that the author makes no attempt to link the martyred Anastasia with the *titulus*-church of S. Anastasia on the Palatine.

III

St Sebastian and Companions

composed by Arnobius the Younger, 430 × 450; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of St Sebastian (Via Appia); the cemetery *inter duas lauros* (Via Labicana); the cemetery of Basileus (Via Appia); the church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina

The *passio* of St Sebastian is the longest and most ambitious ‘epic *passio*’ (to use Delehayé’s term) which has come down to us from late antique Rome.¹ It is also the *passio* which enjoyed the widest circulation—it is preserved in many hundreds of manuscripts—and was by far the most influential of the *passiones* of Roman martyrs.² The exceptional length of this *passio* is due to the fact that the author—Arnobius the Younger (see below)—used the work as a vehicle for long diatribes on Christian belief and the iniquities of pagan religion, placed in the mouths of the principal actors.

The *passio* of St Sebastian may be summarized as follows. Sebastian, a devout Christian from Narbonne who was educated at Milan, served under Diocletian and Maximian as the chief of staff (*princeps*) of the First Cohort of the praetorian guard, which was the emperors’ personal bodyguard (c. 1); because of his position, he was obliged to conceal his Christian belief (c. 2). Two young senators of the clarissimate, who were twin brothers named Marcus and Marcellianus, were being held under house arrest because they were Christians (c. 3). Their friends and relatives, including their wives and their mother Marcia and father Tranquillinus, visited them in prison and tried at length to persuade them to abandon their faith and sacrifice to the gods (cc. 4–8). As they began to waver in their conviction, Sebastian arrived, dressed in his military uniform, and delivered a long harangue on the necessity of holding firm and retaining their Christian belief (cc. 9–23). The house

¹ Listed *BHL* 7543 and *CPL* 2229; for studies of the text, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 186–9; *DACL* XV/1, cols. 1111–28 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* XI, cols. 776–89 [G. D. Gordini]; Delehayé, *Cinq leçons*, pp. 33–7; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, pp. 74–82; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 68–80; and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 393–6.

² The influence may be seen in the *passiones* of Pope Clement (V), SS. Chrysanthus and Daria (X), and the Four Crowned Martyrs (XXIV), as well as in much subsequent Carolingian hagiography, such as that of Einhard and Abbo of Fleury.

where they were being detained belonged to Nicostratus, the chief judicial officer of the prefecture; Nicostratus had a wife named Zoe who had been mute for six years, but who was now miraculously healed by the prayers of St Sebastian (c. 24). On seeing this miracle, Nicostratus asked to become a Christian (c. 25), and was warmly supported in this decision by Marcus and Marcellianus (c. 26). Marcus then addressed his kinsfolk on the desirability of the eternal life (cc. 27–8). Nicostratus dispatched Claudius, the prison registrar, to bring other prisoners to his house (c. 29); when they arrived, Sebastian addressed them on the need to reject the devil (c. 30). Then Sebastian went to Polycarp the priest, who accompanied him back to the house of Nicostratus and addressed the crowd of intending converts (c. 31). Claudius then arrived to say that Nicostratus had been summoned by the urban prefect Chromatius; on being questioned, Nicostratus explained to the prefect that he had moved the Christians to his own house for reasons of security (c. 32). Nicostratus and Claudius then returned to the house of Nicostratus (c. 33); on the way, Claudius explained that he had two sons by his deceased wife, both of whom were suffering from debilitating illnesses, and wondered if Sebastian might be able to cure them (c. 34). When they arrived at the house, Polycarp the priest made arrangements to baptize everyone there (c. 35). Sebastian stood as sponsor in baptism for the men, and Beatrix and Lucina for the women; first the sons of Claudius were healed, and then Tranquillinus, who suffered badly from arthritis and gout, was healed as soon as he had been baptized (cc. 36–7). Then Chromatius, the urban prefect, ordered Tranquillinus to come to him and to explain what was happening with his sons Marcus and Marcellianus (c. 38). Tranquillinus explained to the prefect why he had become a Christian (c. 39). The prefect and Tranquillinus then engaged in a lengthy debate on the relative virtues of Christianity and paganism (cc. 40–7), after which the prefect, who also suffered from arthritis, asked to have Polycarp brought to him, so that he could likewise be cured (cc. 48–50). Polycarp arrived at the house of Chromatius, where a long discussion ensued on the need to have a pure heart before undergoing baptism, during which it emerged that Chromatius had in his house an expensive room made of glass with an astrograph, used for astronomical observations and astrological predictions; it was explained to him that unless this room, together with all the other idols in his house, was smashed, Chromatius could not be baptized; so the glass room and the idols were duly smashed, whereupon Chromatius was baptized and restored to perfect health (cc. 51–61). His son Tiburtius was also baptized (c. 62), along with their entire household, some 1,400 persons (i.e. slaves), who were duly manumitted (c. 63). While these events were taking place, the bishop of Rome was Gaius (c. 64); at this point, there was an onset of severe persecution in Rome (c. 65), and, on the advice of Gaius, Chromatius took sick leave from his post as prefect and removed his entire Christian household, together with Polycarp the priest, to Campania on the Bay of Naples, in order

to be safe from that persecution (c. 66). Those who remained in Rome with Pope Gaius were: the brothers Marcus and Marcellianus; their father Tranquillinus; Sebastian; Tiburtius; Nicostratus with his brother Castorius and his wife Zoe; and Claudius with his brother and son (c. 68). These persons were able to go with Pope Gaius into hiding in the residence of Castulus, who was a staff member of the imperial household on the Palatine (c. 69). Various persons were healed by them (c. 70), and Tiburtius in particular was able to heal a man who had fallen from a great height (cc. 71–2). But martyrdom awaited them all. Zoe was the first to be arrested, while praying at the *confessio* of St Peter (on the Vatican), and was executed by being drowned in the Tiber (cc. 73–4). Tranquillinus went openly to the *confessio* of St Paul (on the Via Ostiense), where he was arrested and stoned to death (c. 75). Nicostratus and Claudius, together with their sons, were arrested while searching for the bodies of Christians along the banks of the Tiber, and were themselves executed by being drowned in the sea (c. 76). Meanwhile, an informer named Torquatus betrayed Tiburtius, who after trial before the new urban prefect (a man named Fabian, who had evidently replaced Chromatius when the latter had gone on sick leave to Campania), was sentenced to execution at the third mile of the Via Labicana (cc. 77–82). Torquatus then betrayed Castulus, who was duly executed (c. 83). Then Marcus and Marcellianus were arrested, executed, and buried in catacombs at the second mile of the Via Appia (c. 84). Then, finally, Sebastian was arrested and, as befitting his station as a soldier of the praetorian guard, was used on Diocletian's orders as a target for military bow-and-arrow practice (c. 85); but his body, filled with arrows and resembling a hedgehog, was recovered by a woman named Irene, who managed to nurse him back to health (c. 86). He then boldly accosted Diocletian on the steps leading up to the Palatine (c. 87); Diocletian ordered him to be beaten to death and for his body to be dumped in the Cloaca Maxima (c. 88). But his body was recovered from the sewer by a matron named Lucina, and then taken for burial to the cemetery *ad catacumbas* (c. 89). After a few years peace was restored to the Church (c. 90).

There is no need to doubt that Sebastian was a genuine Roman martyr: he is recorded against 20 January in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 as being buried in the cemetery on the Via Appia known as *ad catacumbas*:³ 'Fabian, in the cemetery of Callistus; and Sebastian, *ad catacumbas*' (Appendix I, p. 634). The tomb in which Sebastian was originally buried after his martyrdom (precise date unknown) was contained in a crypt located beneath the church

³ On the cemetery *ad catacumbas*, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 251–81; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 216–31; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 181–5; A. M. Nieddu, 'Catacumbas, ad', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 79–82; *eadem*, 'Catacumbas coemeterium', *ibid.* II, pp. 82–6; and R. Giuliani, 'Catacumbas coemeterium', *ibid.* II, pp. 86–93.

which now bears his name.⁴ The crypt, which was subsequently enlarged by Pope Damasus to facilitate access by pilgrims, was—and is—accessed by means of a staircase located in the south-east corner of the present church, a feature which was incorporated in the great basilica which was constructed over the cemetery by Constantine.⁵

The basilica built by Constantine was known in late antiquity as the *Basilica apostolorum* (the later dedication of the church to St Sebastian dates from no earlier than the pontificate of Gregory the Great,⁶ and is in part a reflex of the popularity of the present *passio*). The name of the church derives from the fact that it was built over an earlier structure known as the *Memoria apostolorum*. This *memoria* was demolished to make way for Constantine's much larger basilica, but its structure is known from excavations conducted beneath the present church:⁷ it was a large, trapezoidal enclosure which allowed the Christian faithful to gather to celebrate memorial banquets or *refrigeria* (Krautheimer compared it to a *trattoria*), and its walls contained hundreds of graffiti recording the names of SS. Peter and Paul. One of the graffiti supplied the date of AD 260. This fact needs to be interpreted in the context of an entry in the *Depositio martyrum* for 29 June: 'Peter, *ad catacumbas*, and Paul, on the Via Ostiense, in the consulship of Tuscus and Bassus' [= AD 258] (Appendix I, p. 634). This conjunction of the apostles' names has been variously interpreted, but the prevailing scholarly opinion is that the relics of SS. Peter—and subsequently those of Paul, who is mentioned in graffiti in the *memoria*—had been moved to this site for safety in AD 258, during the persecution of Valerian, and commemorated (by *refrigeria*) in the *Memoria*

⁴ See Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 139–48; see also Prandi, 'La cripta di S. Sebastiano'; R. Giuliani, 'Il contributo dei dati di archivio per la conoscenza della cripta di S. Sebastiano nelle omonime catacombe romane', in *Marmoribus Vestita*, ed. Brandt and Pergola, I, pp. 635–75; as well as Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 130 and 137–8, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 184.

⁵ The principal study of S. Sebastiano is the monumental work by Nieddu, *La Basilica Apostolorum*, esp. pp. 45–148; see also (briefly) *eadem*, 'S. Sebastiani ecclesia, basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 51–7, as well as the earlier studies (on which she draws): F. Fornari, 'Il rilievo del complesso monumentale di San Sebastiano'; Tolotti, *Memorie degli apostoli in catacumbas*, pp. 222–85; Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 99–147; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 89–99; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 63–9; Jastrzebowska, 'S. Sebastiano'; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 65–71. There is a brief but authoritative account of the basilica and cemetery in the site guide by Ferrua, *La basilica e la catacomba*.

⁶ The thirty-seventh homily of Gregory's *Homiliae .xl. in Euangelia* was delivered in the church of St Sebastian (so called) at some point in the 590s: 'Homilia lectionis eiusdem habita ad populum in basilica sancti Sebastiani, die natalis eius' (CCSL CXLI, p. 347).

⁷ See L. Duchesne, 'La "Memoria apostolorum" de la Via Appia', in his *Scripta minora*, pp. 361–406; Prandi, *La Memoria apostolorum*, pp. 41–62; Tolotti, *Memorie degli apostoli in catacumbas*, pp. 1–221; Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St Peter*, pp. 167–94; as well as Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 115–18 and 144; Nieddu, *La Basilica Apostolorum*, pp. 7–13; and F. Bisconti, 'La Memoria apostolorum', in Donati, *Pietro e Paolo*, pp. 63–6.

apostolorum.⁸ The precise location where the apostles' remains were housed in the *memoria* has never been identified; possibly they were simply kept in a *capsella* of some sort. In any case, at a later period when, following the cessation of the 'Great Persecution' in Rome and Italy (306), when Christian worship became legally permissible, the relics were restored to their original locations: those of St Peter to the Vatican, and those of St Paul to his church on the Via Ostiense. The name 'Basilica apostolorum' perpetuated the importance of the earlier *Memoria apostolorum*, which it superseded. The *Basilica apostolorum* is one of six ambulatory basilicas built by Constantine,⁹ all of them intended in some way to enhance the cult of martyrs. Like the Constantinian churches on the Via Praenestina and Via Labicana, that of the Apostles is a basilica with pillared arcades, whose aisles lead around the nave, which terminates in a semi-circular arcade; in the clerestory there was a window above each arcade, and a narthex with pillars provided an imposing entrance.¹⁰ With the exception of the narthex, which has disappeared, and in spite of the Baroque remodelling, the shape and structure of the church may be appreciated today essentially as it was when it was first built in the 320s or 330s.

A century later, in the first half of the fifth century, this church had become one of the most important in Rome, and it was there that Pope Sixtus III (432–40) chose to build the first recorded monastery in Rome, as we learn

⁸ Pasquale Testini provides a full discussion of the various competing theories according to which the apostles came to be commemorated *ad catacumbas* (*Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 224–30); see also discussion by Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St Peter*, pp. 177–82; H. Chadwick, 'St Peter and St Paul in Rome: The Problem of the *Memoria apostolorum ad catacumbas*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1957), 31–52; Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St Peter and St Paul*, pp. 196–200; and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 66–8. On the use of the martyrs' tombs to accommodate *refrigeria*, see Jastrzebowska, *Untersuchungen zum christlichen Totenmahl*, pp. 14–113, esp. pp. 67–81, with pls. 4–7, on the Triclia of the *Memoria apostolorum*, and pp. 205–15 (a survey of the third-century Roman martyrs' tombs which could have accommodated *refrigeria*).

⁹ The unifying feature of all these churches is that they were built over cemeteries, and were provided with staircases leading down from the church to the galleries and crypts beneath; see discussion by Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 55–91, as well as Tolotti, 'Le basiliche cimiteriali'. In addition to the *Basilica apostolorum* (subsequently dedicated to St Sebastian), these include: a church originally dedicated to the general memory of martyrs at the cemetery *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana, subsequently dedicated specifically to SS. Marcellinus and Peter (see p. 439); a church similarly dedicated to the memory of martyrs at the Tor de' Schiavi on the Via Prenestina, known only by excavation; the original church dedicated to St Agnes on the Via Nomentana (the present church dates from the seventh century); a church dedicated to unknown martyrs on the Via Ardeatina, known only by excavation; and the original church of St Laurence (S. Lorenzo fuori le mura) on the Via Tiburtina. Although the present church of S. Sebastiano has undergone some Baroque embellishment, it is the only one of these Constantinian martyr-churches which may be seen in anything resembling its original form.

¹⁰ See Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 64, and the fuller description in *CBCR* IV, pp. 140–4.

from the *Liber pontificalis*;¹¹ the monastery presumably lay adjacent to the *Basilica apostolorum*. The pope's intention was possibly that of providing clergy to curate the shrine of St Sebastian (which had hitherto been curated by priests of the *titulus Bizanti*, that is, of the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelian Hill).¹² These factors led Benedetto Pesci to suggest that the *passio* of St Sebastian was composed by one of the clerics of this monastery soon after its foundation, and hence that its composition could be dated to the pontificate of Sixtus III, from 432 to 440.¹³ More recently Cécile Lanéry has adduced powerful, indeed incontrovertible, arguments that the *Passio S. Sebastiani* was composed in the years 430 × 450 by Arnobius the Younger,¹⁴ an African monk who was resident in Rome during those years.¹⁵ Scholars have previously suspected that Arnobius was active as a hagiographer,¹⁶ but no one before Lanéry has investigated the matter exhaustively. Her arguments are based on the following evidence: first, a striking number of verbal parallels between the *passio* and the writings of Arnobius, especially the *Liber ad Gregoriam*; secondly, on the fact that the versions of the Bible cited by the author of the *passio*—the 'Roman' psalter and the African version of the *Vetus Latina* translation—are exactly those cited by Arnobius; thirdly, that the language of the *passio*, particularly its author's preference for agentive nouns in *-or*, for adjectives in *-osus*, for compound verbs, and for grecisms, are precisely paralleled in the lexical preferences of Arnobius; and, finally, that the types of *clausulae* sought by the author of the *passio*, and their recorded frequencies, especially those of the most widely practised rhythms—*cursus velox* (pp4p), *cursus planus* (p3p), and *cursus tardus* (p4pp)—are matched almost precisely in the *Liber ad Gregoriam* of Arnobius. These similarities

¹¹ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 99; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 234; trans. Davis, p. 38: 'He built a monastery at the Catacombs.' On the monastery, and its importance, see Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 163–5, as well as (briefly) Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 460.

¹² See Pesci, 'Il culto di S. Sebastiano', pp. 187–8, who draws attention to an inscription dated to the pontificate of Innocent I (402–17), which records that two priests named Proclinus and Ursus of the *titulus Bizanti* dedicated a tablet in the crypt of St Sebastian ('TEMPORIBVS SANCTI INNOCENTI EPISCOPI PROCLINVS ET VRSVS PRAESBB. TITVLI BIZANTI SANCTO MARTYRI SEBASTIANO EX VOTO FECER(u)NT'). The inscription is superbly illustrated in Donati, *Pietro e Paolo*, p. 182; for discussion, see A. Ferrua, 'I lavori di Proclinus e Ursus a S. Sebastiano', *La civiltà cattolica* 40 (1964), 287–93. The *titulus Bizanti* is the church of SS. John and Paul on the Caelian Hill.

¹³ Pesci, 'Il culto di S. Sebastiano', esp. pp. 184–8.

¹⁴ On Arnobius, see *EEC* I, p. 82. Arnobius was a monk, perhaps from Africa (he is called 'the Younger' to distinguish him from Arnobius of Sicca); his surviving writings include five works: the *Conflictus cum Serapione* [CPL 239], *Expositiunculae in Euangelium* [CPL 240], the *Liber ad Gregoriam* [CPL 241], *Commentarii in psalmos* [CPL 242], and the *Praedestinatus* [CPL 243].

¹⁵ Lanéry, 'Arnobe le Jeune'.

¹⁶ Arnobius himself says as much in his *Commentarii in psalmos* [ad ps. CI]: 'Scriptissimus passiones eorum [sc. patrum nostrorum] in progenies alteras' (CCSL XXV, p. 149). For earlier arguments that the *Passio S. Sebastiani* is to be attributed to Arnobius the Younger, see Monachesi, 'Arnobio il Giovane', and Pifarré, *Arnobio el Joven*, pp. 42–9.

cannot be a matter of chance, and scholars must henceforth accept Lanéry's demonstration that the *Passio S. Sebastiani* was composed by Arnobius the Younger, presumably while he was resident as a monk at the newly-founded monastery of St Sebastian at the site of the *Basilica apostolorum* on the Via Appia. The *passio* of St Sebastian therefore becomes one of the very few *passiones* of Roman martyrs which can be confidently dated.

The secure dating raises interesting problems about the place of the *passio* in contemporary Christian doctrine. Arnobius was a younger contemporary of Augustine and, like Augustine, a scholar of African origin; but in doctrinal matters, particularly on the question of predestination as set out in his treatise *Praedestinatus* but also in his *Liber ad Gregoriam*, Arnobius distanced himself from his famous contemporary, and his views are more closely associated with the teaching called 'semi-Pelagian', which was current during the first half of the fifth century. By the same token, much of the theological debate in the *passio* is concerned with the question of free will and the acquisition of redemption through baptism (whereas for Augustine and his adherents baptism merely allows the possibility of redemption, which can be conferred by divine grace alone):¹⁷ thus the hitherto pagan Tranquillinus is told that baptism can bestow on him forgiveness for all his sins (c. 36); similarly in the *passio* man is able, by the exercise of his free will, to receive or reject salvation (c. 26). Furthermore, if man is responsible for his own salvation, asceticism is one means of obtaining it, a view which pervades the *passio* (see esp. cc. 9–22). And the emphasis on personal striving fundamentally contradicts the belief that a man's fate could be predestined, or written in the stars: and so the *passio* includes a vehement denunciation of astrology (cc. 54–6).¹⁸

The *passio* of St Sebastian shows that Arnobius the Younger was a scholar of considerable learning, as reflected in his quotations from Terence and Livy, and his frequent allusions to Vergil, not to mention his wide-ranging familiarity with the Bible, in the pre-Hieronymian versions known as the *Vetus Latina* and, for quotations from the Psalms, the so-called 'Roman' text. And we have seen that he was well versed in current theological debate concerning baptism, grace, and predestination. In terms of its learning and rhetorical style, Arnobius the Younger's *passio* of St Sebastian stands apart from the great

¹⁷ See Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 74–9.

¹⁸ See Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics*, pp. 232–83, who notes that astrologers were expelled from Rome under Augustus in AD 11 (pp. 248–51), and thereafter were treated as sorcerers liable to banishment or more severe penalties (astrological studies and theoretical research, however, which are in question here, were at no point banned under the principate: p. 247). On (Christian) opposition to astrology, see W. Gundel, 'Astrologie' in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* I, cols. 817–31, esp. 825–30 on the Christians' attitude, as well as (briefly) Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*, pp. 96–7, and esp. M. L. W. Laistner, 'The Western Church and Astrology during the Early Middle Ages', in his *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. G. Starr (Ithaca, NY, 1957), pp. 57–82, with discussion of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* at pp. 66–7.

majority of *passiones* of Roman martyrs, which appear to have been composed by clerics of local *titulus*-churches who had only very modest competence in Latin. In spite of its length, therefore, and perhaps because of its theological interest, the *passio* of St Sebastian proved immensely popular, and has been preserved in hundreds of manuscripts.¹⁹

Text. The text translated here is that established by Jean Bolland, in the second volume of the *Acta sanctorum*, published at Antwerp in 1643 (*Acta SS., Ianuarii* II, pp. 265–78); Bolland’s text was reprinted in *PL* XVII, cols. 1021–58. There are also texts in Mombricitus II, pp. 459–76, from a late medieval Italian legendary, and in Fábrega Grau, *Pasionario hispanico* II, pp. 148–76, from a tenth-century Spanish *passional*. Lanéry (‘Arnohe le Jeune’) conscientiously recorded variants from these two texts when quoting from the *passio*; but the variants are trivial and do not illuminate the text in any way. The text printed by Bolland is basically sound and, with a very few exceptions recorded in notes, has been the basis for the following translation. However, it must be said that the *passio* is preserved in some 500 manuscripts,²⁰ and until these have been fully collated, and a genuinely critical edition produced, many aspects of the text must remain doubtful. It is therefore welcome news that Cécile Lanéry has a critical edition in hand.²¹

1. Sebastian, a devout Christian who had his education in the region of Milan²² but was a native of Narbonne, was so dear to the emperors Diocletian and Maximian²³ that they entrusted to him the post of chief of staff (*princeps*) of the First Cohort,²⁴ and ordered him always to be present in their company.

¹⁹ One reflex of its popularity is the fact that several of the lengthy chapters containing Sebastian’s discourse were adapted as sermons from the ninth century onwards; see C. Salou, ‘Du légendaire au sermonnaire: avatars de la *Passio Sebastiani*’, *Revue des études augustinienne*s 36 (1990), 285–97.

²⁰ The number is that calculated by Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, p. 72, n. 130.

²¹ See C. Lanéry, ‘La tradition manuscrite de la “*Passio Sebastiani*” (Arnohe le Jeune, *BHL* 7543)’, *Revue d’histoire des textes* 7 (2012), 37–116, with a list of 498 manuscripts of *BHL* 7543 at pp. 41–77.

²² Sebastian’s origin in Milan is mentioned by Ambrose in his *Expositio de psalmo CXVIII* [*CPL* 141], composed during the years 386–8: ‘utamur exemplo Sebastiani martyris, cuius hodie natalis est. Hic Mediolanensis oriundus est’ (*CSEL* LXII, p. 466).

²³ Maximian was an able general who was an old friend of Diocletian; under Diocletian’s tetrarchy he was made Caesar in 285 and Augustus in 286; when Diocletian abdicated in 305, Maximian was forced to do the same. The two Augusti met up in Rome in late 303 to celebrate the *vicennalia* of Diocletian, but otherwise their imperial activities took place in separate spheres, Diocletian’s largely in the East, Maximian’s largely in the West (Gaul and Spain). For their meeting in Rome, see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 56 and 59.

²⁴ Sebastian was the *princeps* (correctly *princeps officii*, ‘chief of staff’) of the First Cohort (*Cohors I*) of the praetorian guard, whose principal function was to guard the emperor and assist him in court ceremonies. (That is why Sebastian, as *princeps* of *Cohors I*, was ‘always in the company’ of Maximian and Diocletian.) On the *cohortes praetoriae*, see A. Passerini, *Le coorti pretorie* (Rome, 1939), pp. 4–40; M. Durry, *Les cohortes prétoriennes* (Paris, 1938), pp. 10–11; Frank, *Scholae Palatinae*, pp. 93–4 and 104; and J. C. N. Coulston, “‘Armed and Belted Men’: the

For he was a man of utter discretion, truthful in his speech, just in his judgement, provident in his advice, reliable in his undertakings, vigorous in his interventions, conspicuous for his goodness, and outstanding in the total honesty of his behaviour. The soldiers venerated him as a father; all those, who were in positions of authority in the palace,²⁵ venerated him with tender love. For he was a true worshipper of God, and it was essential that someone whom God's grace had anointed should be loved by everyone.

2. He therefore demonstrated daily his conscientious duty to Christ, but performed it in such a way that it remained hidden from those sacrilegious kings:²⁶ he was not terrified by fear of martyrdom nor constrained by the love of his inheritance, but behaved as a soldier of Christ hidden beneath the cloak of worldly authority, so that he might strengthen the resolve of Christians whom he saw weakening under torture, and might render unto God the souls whom the devil was attempting to snatch away.

3. And so, after he snatched away the minds of many martyrs from fear of martyrdom and inspired them to the crown of perpetual glory, he appeared as he was, since light cannot lurk in the shadows. He offered daily consolation to the senators (*virī clarissimi*)²⁷ Marcus and Marcellianus, two twin brothers held in chains²⁸ for the name of Christ;²⁹ and to both of them as well as to their

Soldiery in Imperial Rome', in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, pp. 76–118, esp. 76–86; on the role of the *princeps officii* or 'chief of staff' of the praetorian cohorts, see also Jones, *LRE*, pp. 563–7. Under Maxentius (who was the son of Maximian and was declared Augustus by the praetorian guard in 306, after Maximian's abdication; he was killed by Constantine at the battle of the Milvian bridge north of Rome in 312), there was a barracks of praetorian guards at the third mile of the Via Appia, and these guards had a burial ground nearby *ad catacumbas*: see N. Latteri, 'La statio dei pretoriani al III miglio dell'Appia Antica ed il loro sepolcreto *ad catacumbas*', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 114 (2002), 739–57. One wonders whether it was this association—*ad catacumbas* (where the church of S. Sebastiano was located) and praetorian guard—which suggested to the author of the *passio* that Sebastian could be portrayed as a member of the praetorian guard.

²⁵ The *scholae palatinae*, with Sebastian as their chief of staff (*princeps officii*), are conceived by Arnobius as being permanently resident in the emperor's palace in Rome; but in fact the two emperors were very rarely resident in Rome (see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 49–60, and above, n. 23), and the *scholae* would have attended them wherever they were, not remained behind in Rome. A 'palace', without topographical specification, is referred to in cc. 60 and 85, below; and cf. the reference to a 'palace of Diocletian', in the *passio* of St Pancratius (XXV.3, with n. 20).

²⁶ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

²⁷ That Marcus and Marcellianus were *virī clarissimi* indicates that they belonged to the clarissimate, the lowest of the senatorial ranks, a status accorded, for example, to provincial governors: see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9; their father Tranquillinus is also a *vir clarissimus* (below, c. 68). At the time in which the narrative is fictionally situated (284 × 305), Christianity is conceived as spreading to the upper classes. On Christianity among the senatorial classes before Constantine, see Eck, 'Das Eindringen des Christentums', pp. 387–95, and Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy*, pp. 73–81 *et passim*.

²⁸ As Peter Garnsey points out, to be 'held in chains' (*in vinculis*) did not necessarily mean literally to be bound in chains, but meant merely to be 'imprisoned' (*Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 148–50).

²⁹ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, above, pp. 12–13, as well

household slaves, with whom they had been arrested, he provided the salutary advice of the Christian faith, through which they might scorn the transient delights of the world and cease to fear momentary kinds of tortures.

4. When they had reposed in these blessed consolations and passed through the blows of the torturers with determination, they were ordered to undergo capital punishment: on the following terms, that if at the very moment when they were to be beheaded they would agree to sacrifice, they would be restored to their kinsmen and wives and children and property. For they were not only, as we have said, senators of the clarissime, but were endowed with great wealth. Their father was named Tranquillinus and their mother, Marcia; they [the parents] followed them [the martyrs] with their wives and children; for they were held in great affection by their offspring. Whence it happened that they were able to obtain an adjournment of thirty days from the urban prefect, Agrestius Chromatius;³⁰ during this period it might come about that they would agree to sacrifice to idols.

5. Their friends approached them and began to speak: 'Why are you so obdurate, and so iron-hearted, that you allow yourselves to scorn your father's white hairs, and to bring new anguish to your aged mother for having borne you? For she was able to overcome the pain of child-bearing with the consoling thought that she was giving birth to two children in the one painful (experience), and was presenting their father with a twin delight; now, however, this incomparable birth is the source of incurable grief, inconsolable pain, irremediable torment, whereby hope and joy are removed, life is scorned, honour is rejected and the hideousness of death is sought after rather than feared, with all feelings of human affection spurned. We beseech you, beloved friends: put an end at last to these misfortunes, and remember that you have been warned that you yourselves are the fathers of dear children.'

6. As their friends were saying these and similar things, the mother approached, moaning that she was wretched and, unbinding her head-dress and revealing the white hairs of her advanced age, in their presence tore open the dress which covered her breasts and to general lamentation exposed beneath the loosened garments the teats which they had suckled,³¹ and in tears she

as Benko, *Pagan Rome and the early Christians*, pp. 1–29. Cf. also Tertullian, *Apologeticum* i. 4: 'Hanc igitur primam causam apud uos collocamus iniquitatis odii erga nomen Christianorum' (CCSL I, p. 85).

³⁰ No urban prefect named Agrestius Chromatius is attested for the period in question (for which documentation is substantial): see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 110–11; nor is there an entry under this name in *PLRE* I. Cf. also Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 252–4.

³¹ The topos of the mother baring her breasts to the children she has suckled goes back to Homer, *Iliad* xxii. 79–81. Walter Berschin (*Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, p. 76) points to a striking parallel in a letter of Jerome to Heliodorus, *Ep.* xiv. 2: 'licet sparso crine et scissis uestibus ubera, quibus nutrierat, mater ostendat' (CSEL LIV, p. 47), and one might add a similarly striking parallel in Dracontius, *Orestes*, lines 739–40: 'conturbata parens nudis exerta papillis / orabat natum: "per haec, puer, ubera, parce!"'.

recalled the soothing words which she had spoken to them in infancy. She then addressed them both: 'You, my son, were always the most coddled one, and you [addressing the other son] were more shy; in you I gave birth to my own image; in you I reproduced your father's looks; you were more useful to your father, this one more like him. Woe is me! Incomparable sorrows hem me in on all sides,³² unheard-of misery and twin bereavement, unlike any other afflictions at all. I give up my sons, hastening to death of their own accord—sons whom I would pursue into the midst of a battle-line of armed warriors if enemies had taken them from me, if cruel sentences had imprisoned them, I would break into their prison-cell to die there. But this is a new manner of death, in which the executioner is invited to strike, life is desired to be lost, and death is invited to come. This is a new kind of grief, a new misery, in which the youth of one's children is willingly given up, and the wretched old age of parents is compelled to live on.'

7. As the mother continued in this manner, the debilitated father, already worn down with old age, was carried in by slaves, and, sprinkling dust on his swan-white head of hair,³³ addressed to the heavens words of this kind: 'I have come to say farewell to my sons as they advance willingly to their death, so that everything which I had prepared to be used by my sons at my own burial, I shall wretchedly furnish for their burial. O my sons, the support of my old age and the twin light of my entrails, born happily and raised favourably, of outstanding memory and distinctive genius, educated in the knowledge of all liberal arts: what is this insanity, born of your own will, which suddenly made you lovers of death? Death has never delighted the living, never induced those dying to love it: for it is received by whomever it could approach with a violent struggle, and is not willingly accepted by any living person. If an impoverished debtor in the grasp of a greedy money-lender suffers death, he can on no account love it: he is understood not only not to love it, but to fear it. For what reason, then, does he, who has abundant wealth and owes nothing to anyone at all, seek it? Come here, old men, you who still feel paternal affections, and weep with me over my sons; come here, young men, and weep over young men dying of their own will. Come here, fathers, and forbid such a thing, so that you do not experience it yourselves. Cease from weeping, O my eyes pouring out rivers of tears, and bring on blindness, so that I do not see cut down with a sword those for whom I shuddered when even a light lash touched them, whom I feared to see even mildly saddened.'

³² A quotation from Terence, *Adelphi* 301–2 (*vae misero mihi! tot res repente circumvallant se unde emergi non potest*, 'Alas, poor me! So many things suddenly box one in from which there's no way to escape'). On the author's knowledge of Terence, see P. Courcelle, 'Ambroise de Milan face aux comiques latins', *Revue des études latines* 50 (1972), 223–31, at 226.

³³ The phrase 'swan-white head of hair' (*cygnaeo capiti*) is a poeticism; cf. the fourth-century poet Avienus, *Aratea* 635: 'cygnaeo capiti et curuo contermina signo'.

8. While the old man is saying these and other things, the wives of the two men arrive together with their offspring, and presenting to the men their very own little children, they tearfully pour out these words: 'Whom do you abandon us to serve? To whom do you consign the affection of our marriage? Who do you think will be the masters of these infants, and the rapacious invaders of your homes? Who will be the occupiers of your household? Or who are to divide up among themselves the slaves whom you have maintained? Alas, with what a steely kind of wicked cruelty you despise your kindred, reject your friends, cast off your wives, disown your children, and commit yourselves willingly to the executioner!'

9. Meanwhile, while these things were being said and others related, amid the tears of the wives and the sighs of the children the soldiers of Christ began to soften, and to pay attention to their anguish. As I said earlier, St Sebastian, a man thoroughly Christian in every respect, was present at this public display, though disguised beneath his military uniform and hidden under his cloak. But when he saw God's champions start to falter under the immense weight of the struggle, he thrust himself into their midst and said, 'O you mighty soldiers of Christ, you warriors well equipped for the divine battle, you have arrived at your reward through your great mental strength—and you now lay down your eternal crown because of wretched blandishments? Let the might of Christ's soldiers learn through you that it is armed with faith rather than with the sword. Do not cast away the trophies of your victories through the entreaties of women, and release from beneath your feet the prostrate neck of the defeated enemy so that he may engage once again in victorious and renewed battle—[the enemy] whose wicked persistence, though it was savage in opposing you is rendered even more savage when its rage is renewed. Raise up above earthly affections the glorious trophy of your struggle, and do not lose it through the tears of children.'

10. 'These (people), to whose weeping you are listening, would rejoice today if they could know the things which you know; for they think that this life is the only one, after which, if it comes to an end, no part of the living soul can remain once the body has passed away. For if they knew that there was another life where death was unknown, a life ignorant of sadness, in which immortality reigns supreme and perpetual joys abound, they would straightaway hasten to join you in it, and, reckoning this present life at naught, would seek that other, which endures in exultation and knows no end whatsoever. This present life is so transient and so untrustworthy, that it cannot even keep faith with those who love it. Since the very beginning of the world it has tricked those who believe in it, has deceived those who desire it, has laughed at those who presume on it, and thus has given back nothing at all certain, so that it is proved to have lied to everyone. And would that it were only hateful for the guilt of a single lie, and did not compel all those who love it to commit sins of all sorts! It bestows voracity on gluttons, inflicts intoxication on drunks, it

brings the shipwreck of shame to adulterers, it grants unspeakable perversity to those practising incest; it persuades the thief to steal, the angry man to rage, the liar to deceive. It sows dissension among married couples, discord among friends, strife among lovers of peace, injustice among the just, temptation among brothers. It takes justice away from judges, chastity from the chaste, skill from craftsmen, it removes discipline from moral behaviour. And let us recall the even greater crimes which it inflicts upon those who love it: if a brother ever killed a brother, if a son killed his father, if a friend has been killed by a friend—in consideration of what, in hope of what, in trust in what are these unspeakable crimes committed? Is it not that, seduced by love of the present life, they commit these crimes, and while they love it more than is just they pursue men with wicked hatred? Why does a pirate kill a sailor, why does a robber kill a wayfarer, a rich man oppress a poor man, a proud man a humble one, and every evil-doer assault any innocent person he meets? They perpetrate these evils because they seek to serve this present life, and think to perpetuate themselves for longer periods by loving it. These crimes take place for no other reason than that this wretched life of the flesh is served by creatures of the flesh.’

11. ‘It is, therefore, this [present life] which enjoins crimes on them, commands evil deeds, argues for injustice; and after it is sated with all cruelty and every kind of filth, it consigns those who serve it to its daughter, that is, everlasting death. For from it, and from its womb, was born eternal death, at the time when the first men were enslaved to gluttony and wantonness and visible delights; and therefore those [first men] who had been born to the eternal life were cast down here in this realm of death; and from here they are once again cast down to hell, taking nothing with them except their sins.³⁴ It is this present life, therefore, which is deceiving you, my dear friends, to the point where you are recalling with mistaken advice your friends as they proceed to eternal life.’

12. ‘This present life, O holy kinsmen, is prompting you to the point where you are recalling with foolish lamentations your sons as they advance to the fellowship of heaven, to incorruptible glory, to the companionship of the eternal Emperor. It is this, O you chaste spouses of the saints, which caused you to charge the minds of the martyrs with disloyalty through a show of affection, and to offer death in lieu of liberation. For if they had given in to your remonstrations, they could have been with you for a short while longer, but afterwards separated; and thus they would have had to be separated from you in such a way that you would only ever see them in the midst of perpetual torments—where greedy flame³⁵ devours the souls of unbelievers, where

³⁴ This phrase (*‘nihil secum praeter peccata portantes’*) recurs in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV. 15, below, p. 154); see discussion by De Vogüé, ‘La passion de sainte Cécile’, pp. 8–9.

³⁵ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* ii. 758 (*ignis edax*, ‘greedy fire’).

dragons eat the lips of blasphemers, where serpents with their bites feed on the hearts of unbelievers. In that place wailing and moaning rings out, and a disorderly uproar, which the violence of the torments provokes, and the heat of the flame wrings out. For this punishment, which shall take possession of unbelievers there, knows no limit, is ended by no conclusion, and not even after the expiry of the savage flames is it consumed, but whoever was burned up is restored to rekindled fires.'

13. 'Permit these men to escape this punishment, and give thought to snatching yourselves from it as well. Meanwhile, permit these two to reach their predestined crown. Do not be afraid: for they will not be separated from you, but will go ahead to prepare for you shining dwellings in heaven, in which you may remain together with your children in eternal joy. For if your houses made of stone give you pleasure, how much more must the beauty of those dwellings attract you—where there are dining-rooms radiant with pure gold, which have living-rooms made from gems and pearls? There the brilliant bloom of roses never fades, there the flowering groves are green with perpetual vigour, there the fresh meadows flow always with honeyed streams, there the meadow-grass is bright with yellow flowers, and the perfumed fields abound in delightful odours.³⁶ The breezes there breathe nectared scent on those who enjoy eternal life. Light shines there without (needing) any ray of the sun, the clear skies are unclouded, and the eyes enjoy daylight without the shadows of night. Pleasures there are curtailed by no business dealings, calm there is disturbed by no anxiety at all; howling, wailing, moaning, lamentation, and crying are never heard there, and have no name; the eyes of those who dwell there never see anything foul or ugly, hideous, black, horrid, or sordid, but rather these wide-open eyes enjoy without pause beauty in the loveliness of the groves, in the brilliance of the health-giving air, in beauty, and every kind of delight, and nothing at all reaches the ears which perturbs the mind. For the melodies of hymns are continually heard there, which are sung in praise of the King by angels and archangels. Bitterness and the harshness of bile have no place there; thunder is never heard, lightning and lightning-bolts never appear. The copses there produce cinnamon, and the bushes burst forth with balsam. The scent of the air pours out its delights through all its parts, and food there produces no excrement. For just as the ears are nourished with good news, and the nostrils with good odours, and the eyes with good sights, so this refreshment cannot burst out into digestion; thus the refreshment, which the mouth receives there, tastes delightful to the taste of everyone who shall have enjoyed it. As soon as something is conceived, everything responds to their desire, and a quick result follows with all its delights.'

³⁶ More reminiscences of Vergil: *Aeneid* vi. 674 (*prata recentia*, 'fresh meadows'), *Georgics* iv. 109 (*croceis ... floribus*, 'yellow flowers').

14. 'For whoever in this mortal life shall fight against his desires and against these delights, and not consume them here, will there receive them in totality from his Creator. For He created man that he might live, and placed death at the entrance of delight, so that those³⁷ who were allowed to escape from the fear of death might seek eternal life; and when they learned that in addition to this life there was another one, they might enquire whether it could be cut short by old age or terminated by death; when they have learned that it is immortal, they might enquire whether this eternity itself can bestow distinction on the just and punishment on the unjust.'

15. 'And when they have specifically established that it is so, it remains for them to ask why riches were created by the Creator, if they are to be rejected by His law; or why such a variety of animals and birds and serpents should have been created, if it is to be renounced by everyone; and why an inborn delight in the arousal of desire was placed inside our bodies, if its exercise should not only make us guilty before the Creator, but should even commit us to eternal flames. One asks therefore: "Why were these riches created by the Creator, if they are to be spurned?" Let us reply: "These riches created by the Creator address those who love them somehow, saying, Love us in such a way that we are never separated from you. We cannot follow you in death; we can accompany you in life, but only if you yourselves command us. The grasping money-lender and the avaricious farmer: the one gives gold to a man so that he can receive it back doubled; the other commits various seeds to the earth, so that, if it so transpire, he can hope to receive back a hundredfold what he planted as single seeds; and the debtor renders to the creditor a double return, and the earth a hundredfold return. What a disgrace! The debtor is able to render his debt to the money-lender, and the earth can restore to the farmer the seeds multiplied a hundredfold. If God has received from you His riches, can He not restore them to you with great increase?"'

16. 'You now ask, "Why did He give me riches, if they are to be returned to Him by me?" He gave them to you, so that you should know what great solace there is in them, what pleasure, what luxury, and what delights they can provide: so that, having a loving relationship with your riches through them, you should yourself hand them over to be kept by our Lord Jesus Christ. If you should wish not to entrust them to Him, or if the voracity of gluttony should intrude upon them, or if wantonness, the mother of sexual desire, should snatch them from you, or if—as undoubtedly you know very well—advancing death should wrest them from you unforeseen, so that you are unable to possess them totally any longer, nor even to see them: if you were to pass through the middle of barbarian battle-ranks, and should find there a strong

³⁷ Bolland's text here reads *hi queis libet a mortis timore evadere*, where *queis* is the archaic dative plural form of the relative pronoun. This is a piece of self-conscious archaism by Arnobius; one would normally expect *quibus*.

man who always loved you, who had even given you a sack full of money, saying to you: "Give me for safe-keeping the monies which I gave to you, for these barbarians are threatening to take them from you; and when they have taken them, they will kill you with their swords"—would you not throw yourself at his feet and ask him to take them from you, in the certain belief that he would give back to you more than he had taken, and would free you from enemies? It remains the case that you have Christ as the guardian of your riches.'

17. 'Let us come on to the question of pleasures. He who has ears for hearing shall hear them saying to him: "If you truly love us, hand us over to him: he will restore us to you complete and undiminished in that place in which we can remain with you always; for if in this life you should wish to employ us in your service, we shall there deny to you the use of our service, as we knew it here. Release us in the meantime from serving the dying, given that the lives of mortals are so short, so that we may perpetually serve the immortals". For it is written: "For the elect the days shall be shortened, so that our obedience be not lengthy."³⁸ Indeed we serve the unjust on a swift course: we serve the wicked, the criminal, and the infamous—not willingly, but on account of him who subjected us. We shall nevertheless be freed from the service of corruption, and shall be recalled to the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.³⁹ Accordingly all delight, being reserved for the future life, is not destroyed; nor indeed are treasures, deposited by him who buried them in the earth, thought to have perished; but rather he thinks he possesses them the more securely as he has secretly and safely hidden them.'

18. 'Let therefore the profusion of all delights be buried, so that they are not touched in this life which passes; for if they are in use here, they shall be lost in that future life which never passes. Grant even that this life be extended over a period of a hundred years: will it not seem on the last day as if it had never existed, and to leave traces in the recollection of a guest of abiding with us for just one day? But that other life endures for ever, and insistently perseveres; it also grows younger with the passing years, and flourishes, and starts the beginning of its renewal there where the end is at hand. O the truly ignoble and bounty-less man, who is not caught up with love of this wonderful life! He who fears to surrender this perishable life, and to receive that life which knows not how to perish at all, in which delights and pleasures, and riches and joys, begin in such a way that they know no end: thus they take their beginning, so that they cannot be concluded.'

³⁸ Matt. 24: 22; the second clause, 'so that our obedience be not lengthy' ('ut servitus nostra non sit longa'), is not in the Vulgate.

³⁹ Cf. Rom. 8: 21 ('Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God'), a parallel noted by Lanéry, 'Arnohe le Jeune', p. 282, n. 46.

19. 'For whosoever should refuse to be a lover of that excellent life, not only loses this (life), but shall not arrive at that other one, but even—as I said already—is seized and detained by everlasting death, in which there is perpetual flame, relentless anguish, and everlasting punishment; in which dreadful agents are present, whose arms are dragon heads, whose eyes cast out fiery arrows, whose teeth protrude like an elephant's, and who drive [sinners] to torture as with scorpions' tails, whose voices sound like the roar of lions, whose appearance strikes fear as well as pain and death. And if only death could take place in these straitened circumstances! But, what is more grievous, life is lived to be governed by tortures, and people are reconstituted so that their limbs, worn down by serpents' bites, may again and again be subjected to repeated bites.'

20. 'This is the entire reason for the struggle, the reason which teaches that the pains of martyrdom should be undergone patiently. Do not, O friends, do not, O kinsfolk, do not, O venerable spouses of these saints, do not recall those whom you love from life to death, do not lead them from joy to sorrow, do not drag them from light to shadow, and summon them from eternal peace to perpetual punishment. This is to set a fish-hook in order to fish in the devil's company, and invite them to a modest delight in which lurk tortures for their inner organs, and death is drawn from the torment of their entrails. Is this not to place fleeting joys before the repayment of eternal delights, and, so that they may laugh a little, consign them to eternal tears? We all condemn this in gladiators, who offer themselves up of their own accord, who concern themselves with the delights of a single year's life, and do not reflect that the reward arises from these very delights. And they are put to death by the blows of swords, or else, in full view of the people offer the sight of their internal organs with the covering of the stomach ripped open, so that their body fat, which ill-advised feasting has accumulated, is offered up to the devil to be devoured. (They are) enemies, who do these things according to that persuasion—by that same persuasion God's martyrs, proceeding to the eternal life, are called back so that they may live a life of a few days' duration: they beseech (God's martyrs) to undergo eternal tortures, and not to fear eternal death, which is especially to be feared!'

21. 'Perhaps at this point you will object: why does the Christian not fear torments, and why is he not terrified by pain inflicted by the present torturer? He is not broken by fear, and is not guided by pain, for the reason that he knows himself to have purchased the joy of perpetual well-being for the price of the one pain, and will arrive at perpetual bliss and eternal happiness through momentary suffering. But if this present suffering is to be feared, if the present executioner is to be feared, if the novel and exquisite cruelty of the torturer is to be feared—what is more to be feared, and avoided, and guarded against?—this (suffering), which rages today and vanishes tomorrow?—this (suffering), which burns today, and tomorrow grows cold?—this (suffering),

which is brought on in the hour, and removed in the (same) hour? Or that, which is never brought to an end, which is at no time annulled, and is certainly not terminated by long use? For this pain is either light, and can be borne patiently, or it is severe, and offers the aforementioned end after a glorious struggle: but that painful torment and torture by fire, which is given to lovers of this present life, even though it is more violent than all known kinds of torture, is never brought to an end, and rages more vehemently immediately after it has commenced: and no conclusion to the violence, no end at all is at hand; but having all kinds of torture at its disposal, it is continually renewed so that it may rage, is increased so that it may torture, and is ignited so that it may burn more fiercely.'

22. 'Let us therefore urge those whom we love to escape from that death, and let us boldly prepare ourselves for escaping it: let us not be afraid to suffer pain in the body for one hour, we who hope to rejoice with Christ in perpetuity; let us allow our souls to pass from the body with the palm of martyrdom, so that we can escape eternal punishments, and arrive in the sidereal dwelling-place filled with delights. Let us convert our tears into joy:⁴⁰ because we ought not to lament them as if they were about to die, those whom we believe are to reign with Christ. Let us congratulate the conquerors of our enemies as they trample down their necks; let us rejoice that they are dressed in the upper-class cloak of martyrdom, and pride ourselves that they are made consuls in heaven. Behold the day on which the tyrant thinks that he has conquered them: but while he seizes them, he is himself seized; while he detains them, he is shackled; while he tortures them he is himself tortured; while he taunts them he is made a laughing-stock; while he kills them he is himself killed. Now, therefore, let us stimulate our feelings towards the love of martyrdom, so that we may boldly welcome him who wishes to seize victory from our captivity, and as if awaking from a heavy sleep let us open the eyes of our minds, so that, noticing the pits which the enemy had set for our destruction, we may avoid them with the help of God, and, with the devil and all his attendants falling into the pit which he had prepared, let us say with the prophet, "They dug a pit before my face, and they are fallen into it".⁴¹

23. And so when St Sebastian, dressed in his military cloak and girded with his sword-belt, had delivered this speech, suddenly for almost an entire hour he was illuminated by a brilliant light descending from heaven, and was dressed in a shining white mantle by seven bright angels, and a young man

⁴⁰ Cf. Ps. 29: 12 ('Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy'), a parallel noted by Lanéry, 'Arnobé le Jeune', p. 282, n. 46.

⁴¹ Ps. 56: 7. The wording is that of the Roman psalter (ed. R. Weber, *Le Psautier romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins* (Rome, 1953), p. 126), as noted by Lanéry, 'Arnobé le Jeune', p. 282, n. 48.

appeared beside him, making the sign of peace, and saying, 'You shall always be with me'.⁴²

24. These events were taking place within the house of the head of the judicial bureau (*primiscriinius*),⁴³ named Nicostratus, where Marcellianus and Marcus were being held in custody. This Nicostratus had a wife named Zoe. Six years previously she had been rendered mute by a fierce onslaught of illness; yet not only had she not lost the ability of hearing and understanding, but she retained the use of her ears at a level above what she had previously had. Accordingly, when she had understood everything which St Sebastian had said, and had even seen the light surrounding him, when everyone else was terrified in amazement at this miracle, she signalled to them with her hand, almost as if they were to be reproved because they did not believe in so evident a demonstration, and falling on her knees she began to beseech him with gestures of her hands. But St Sebastian, when he saw that she was unable to make known the secrets of her heart through the expression of her tongue, having enquired concerning the cause of this silence, learned that the power of speech had been taken from her by the immense force of her illness. Then St Sebastian said: 'If I am indeed a true servant of Christ, and all the things which this woman heard and believed from my mouth are true, let my Lord Jesus Christ command that the use of her tongue be restored to the woman, and let Him Who opened the mouth of the prophet Zechariah⁴⁴ open her mouth as well'; and he made the sign of the Cross on her mouth. And at this word from St Sebastian, the woman cried out in a loud voice, saying: 'Blessed are you, and blessed is the speech from your mouth: and blessed are those who through you believe in Christ the Son of the living God. For I saw with my own eyes an angel coming to you from heaven, and holding before your eyes a book, from the reading of which flowed all the substance of your sermon. Blessed are those who believe in all the things you have spoken, and cursed are those who have doubts about even one word of the things they have heard: for just as the coming of dawn drives away all the shadows of night and restores the light which the darkness of night had denied, so does the light of your words wipe away all the mist and all the darkness of ignorance, and after the shadows of night returns the clear brightness of day to the eyes of those who duly have faith: not only did it expel the shadows of disbelief from me, but even opened the gateway of my speech, which had remained closed for six years'.

⁴² Cf. Luke 23: 43 (Christ's words to the thief on the cross): 'Amen I say to you, this day you shall be with me in paradise.'

⁴³ The *primiscriinius* was the head of the administrative and judicial office of the prefecture; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 587–91; C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, pp. 89–91; and esp. Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, pp. 39–56.

⁴⁴ On Zechariah (father of John the Baptist), who was rendered silent by the angel Gabriel, and then had his speech miraculously restored so that he could utter the prophecy known as the *Benedictus*, see Luke 1: 18–22, 64–79.

25. As Nicostratus, her husband, saw that Christ's mighty power was being enacted in his wife, he threw himself at her feet and sought her forgiveness, for the reason that, in accordance with the emperor's and the prefect's command, he had kept God's saints in chains; and, removing the iron shackles from their hands, he embraced their knees and began to beg that they deign to depart, saying, 'O how blessed I should be if I could myself deserve to be shackled in return for your freedom! Perhaps I shall be cleansed by the outpouring of my own blood, so that I may escape that death of eternal punishment, and attain to that life which God deigned to reveal to us through the words of my lord Sebastian.'

26. When he had asked Marcellianus and Marcus to leave, they said to him: 'If you had received the glory of the faith, which you never previously had, how can we, in abandoning the faith which we have always had since our infancy, not grant to you the chalice of our martyrdom, which we are able to pour out for you? For Christ is rich in every respect, and from the vast abundance of His wealth He can reveal to those who approach Him greater rewards than are sought. For even though you have been non-believers, if it were granted to you to recognize the light of truth, how much greater would the things which you seek to receive seem to you as believers? For heavenly mercy is always prepared freely to grant everything to you; and it increases its bounty for each person by as much as his mind has accepted the standard of a higher faith. Your faith, therefore, takes its beginning from your indoctrination: all the things which many years' study scarcely bestows, you have received in the space of an hour. No recollection of your kinsfolk prevents you from believing. No cherished feelings for the tender age of your sons and family call you back. You suddenly scorn that which you have always loved, and you seek that which you have never known. Setting out on unknown pathways you suddenly advance to Christ, and you have entered heaven in spirit because you have sought no solace on earth. O what an incomparable celebration of the deed! O what an imitable example of virtue! The waters of holy baptism have not yet led you to Christ, you have not even received the first tokens of your service in His soldiery, and yet you take up arms on behalf of the true King, and, releasing His soldiers from their iron shackles, you fearlessly hope to be killed in place of those who were to be killed.'

27. When on hearing these things everyone had shown repentance for their former beliefs by weeping, Marcus said: 'Learn, dear parents, and let your conjugal love learn, O you wives, to place the shield of virtues against the fist of the devil and against all the arrows of the affections of carnal desire, and not to give way to the enemy amidst the battle-lines of the tyrant's army, to fight bravely, to hold your position, and advance valiantly to the King. Let them rise up as much as they wish, and let the attendants of the demons rage, and let them lacerate our bodies with whatever wounds they wish; they can kill the body, but they cannot overcome a soul fighting for the truth of the faith.'

Wounds suffered for the emperor make more glorious soldiers:⁴⁵ for in this (contest) the devil now rages with the fury of his tyranny, in which he foresees that he can be tortured by the victory of your perseverance: and therefore he inflicts punishments, so that his hope does not perish; he threatens death, in order to terrify; he promises life, so he can snatch it away; he offers security, so he may take it away. This (is) his entire strategy of war, this is the plan of his deception: to snatch away the body by tortures, and subjugate the soul to sin. Let us on the contrary struggle not to give way to the enemy, to scorn the body, to assist the soul. For why should powerful leaders turn their backs on their poor soldiers, and give up in that battle in which they could be victors? For what reason do they fear to die, those who know that this is the nature of mankind, not its penalty? Why, I say, should they fear to die, those who believe that this life is false and the true life cannot be found except by those who reject this false and transient life, which (offers) nothing to those who love it, but instead demands (the commission of) sins, urges crimes, brings (with it) criminal activities, and requires nothing from those who love it except that they never think at all of the everlasting life, and have no hope that the kingdom of God is in the future?’

28. ‘Now let us see to what misfortunes it [this present life] lies subject, and the dangers to which this slave-girl is devoted, such that, when we have tested her and are unable to control her, in removing our services from her domination, let us seek another to whom service may justly be given. How many of its lovers did serious disaster suddenly oppress, did the thunder in the sky strike down, did lightning burn, did shipwreck drown, did chaos cover, did Charybdis swallow, did the sword slaughter! And the wretches, in dismissing this life with all its pains, cannot find that other life at all! For torture does not take us to that life, but rather the just cause (does). From one and the same kind of torments eternal life is bestowed on the innocent and punishment is appointed for the offenders.’

29. And so when Marcus had pursued these and similar (arguments), everyone who was present began to give thanks to God, and in tears they all repented for the fact that they had preferred the love of the flesh to God’s charity, and that they had dared to turn back the convictions of the saintly men from the combat of martyrdom. And when all those, who had come in order to undo the saintly men, were unanimously believing in Christ, Nicostratus together with his wife pressed himself forward, saying: ‘I shall not take food or drink unless the mystery of the Christian religion is conveyed to me.’ St Sebastian said to him: ‘Play down your official rank, and begin to be the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*) of Christ, rather than of the prefect. Listen to my advice, and gather together all those whom prison encloses,

⁴⁵ The sentence is borrowed from the *passio* of St Anastasia (II.1; p. 64).

whom shackles bind, whom penitentiaries produce. When you have done this, I shall bring a priest of sacred authority, so that you may receive the sacrament of the mystery [i.e. baptism] together with all those who wish to believe. Thus⁴⁶ did the devil attempt to take away from Christ His saints: he is (ever present), and he (still) tries to do so; how much more ought we to care, by the evidence of our devotion, for those whom the devil has gained unfairly, and restore them to their Creator?' And Nicostratus replied to these (words), saying: 'How can holy things be entrusted to the wicked and the guilty?' St Sebastian said: 'Our Saviour deigned to reveal His presence to us on behalf of sinners, and He revealed the mystery, through which all sins and crimes are removed from man, and all the virtues of the Lord are bestowed. If, during the first stages of your conversion, you first bestow this gift on Christ, the reward of His recompense—the crown of martyrdom—will attend you, bringing with it the unfading flowers of the virtues, providing the joys of eternal life.' When Nicostratus the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*) heard this, he went to Claudius the prison registrar (*commentariensis*),⁴⁷ and ordered him to bring all these people to his house, saying: 'Because all their cases are to be heard at the next session, I wish that they be present together with those Christians who are at my house, so that no one person can be absent from the prefect's investigation.'

30. Therefore when everyone, bound in chains, has been brought to the house of (Nicostratus) the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*), Sebastian the man of God addresses them in this way: 'If diabolical crimes may yield to heavenly virtues, your guilt is removed by death, and is called back from transient joys. The wicked enemy has acted through his henchmen so that he could overturn the minds of the soldiers of Christ, (minds) raised up to the height of the virtues and placed on the very summit of perfection, and attempt to submerge them in the filth of the lower regions. For this reason my mind, provoked by the attack of enemies, grew hot, so that, in taking you from the captivity of the enemy who had already acquired you, I could return you to your Creator. For the devil is not known to be your lord, nor your creator, nor your father; but God is known to be your Father and Lord and Creator. And if, in abandoning Him you go to that other one [the devil], who is your enemy only so that he can lead you to the punishment of everlasting death, and would make you arrive at this deadly end result, how much more ought you to return

⁴⁶ Reading *sic* for Bolland's *si*.

⁴⁷ The *commentariensis* was the official of the judicial bureau responsible for keeping records of the custody of prisoners and supervising a staff of torturers, in other words, the prison registrar; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 522 and 587; Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, pp. 57–9; and Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, p. 158: 'a rank below the centurionate, found on the office staff of most magistrates; his function was the keeping of records ... he was particularly responsible for the custody of those accused, the keeping of records of criminal proceedings, and the supervision of putting into effect any sentence passed.'

to Him, Who gave His only Son over to martyrdom and death, so that He could free us from eternal suffering and everlasting death?’ When St Sebastian had pursued these and similar (arguments), everyone threw themselves down in tears, and on bended knee began to release the lamentation of their hearts, and to shout out, in repentant tones, that they had sinned and acted wickedly. They therefore poured out bitter tears and in unanimous voices intoned that they wished to believe in Christ. Then the blessed Sebastian ordered that they all be released from their chains.

31. After this St Sebastian went to the priest Polycarp, to where he was in hiding as a result of the persecution, and reported to him everything which had happened. Having heard this St Polycarp gave thanks to God, and went with him to the house of Nicostratus the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*); and, seeing the crowds of believers (and) greeting them with great joy, he said: ‘Blessed are you all, who have heard the words of our Lord Jesus Christ saying, “Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me that I am gentle and humble in heart: and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light.”’⁴⁸ And therefore you, our brothers, whom the waters of baptism have not yet washed (clean) and turned into dear sons by their consecration to Almighty God: because you tried to recall these blessed soldiers of Christ from their holy undertaking, your duty was repentance, so that through it you would receive remission. Now, because you have approached to such great glory that you even joyously desire to run towards and freely embrace that same martyrdom—from which you sadly wished to recall others: you should know that you have attained to forgiveness and arrived at the palm (of victory). This procedure of Christ is ancient. For He deigned and desired to give the “vessel of election”⁴⁹ [i.e. St Paul] as teacher to the gentiles, who not only used to recall the minds of the faithful from their undertaking of devotion, but even struck down by stoning those who did not wish to abandon Christ.⁵⁰ The Lord gave him to us as an apostle, and bestowed Paul on us (having been converted) from Saul: he made an apostle out of an apostate, and gave to His church a teacher out of a persecutor. He was made a lover of martyrdom who had been the agent of persecution; and he who formerly was pleased by the affliction of others, later rejoiced in his own persecution. Therefore He Who then employed this virtue in His apostle, has now taken away your imprisonment from the very holding cell of hell and from the very jaws of dragons, and opened the doors of eternal life to you now that you are proceeding from the shadows to the light. Accordingly, because all demons,

⁴⁸ Matt. 11: 28. The wording is that of the African version of the *Vetus Latina* (cf. H. von Soden, *Das lateinische Neutestament in Afrika zur Zeit Cyprians* (Leipzig, 1909), p. 388), as noted by Lanéry, ‘Arnobe le Jeune’, p. 282, n. 48.

⁴⁹ Acts 9: 14.

⁵⁰ Saul’s participation in the stoning of Stephen: Acts 7: 55–60.

which are the sons of darkness, are saddened, all the holy angels, who are the sons of light, are delighted; let each one of you come forth, and give his name, so that, after a fast stretching from the present time until dark, there may be a suitable opportunity for the joyous sacrament of baptism.⁵¹ For it is right that, as the light departs from the world of mortals it comes to our immortal souls, so we, who in this world are wallowing in the filth of darkness, when we are washed and purified by the waters of salvation and are clothed in our earnestness, may proceed happily to Christ.' As Polycarp was explaining these and similar matters, they were all overjoyed, and each person hastened to give his name even before he was asked.

32. While these things were taking place, Claudius the prison registrar (*commentariensis*) comes to the house of Nicostratus, the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*), where it was all happening; and he says to Nicostratus: 'The prefecture is violently agitated that you ordered guilty persons to be committed to custody in your house. For this reason the prefect ordered that you be brought to him in person.⁵² Pay attention to the reply you ought to give when you are questioned.' And so when Nicostratus went in to the prefect, when he was asked why he had wished to commit those persons, who were being confined in prison, to custody in his own home, he replied: 'On the orders of Your Magnificence I took the Christians to be guarded in my own house, so that I could strike the fear of martyrdom into them; I had them put together with (other) guilty persons, so that they would agree to your orders and my persuasion—if not by their own agreement at least by someone else's experiment—and would be frightened that a similar punishment would finish them off.' The prefect, therefore, willingly listening to these (arguments), dismissed him saying: 'I shall cause you to be reimbursed with the great wealth (to be obtained) from their relatives, since through you their sons shall be restored safely to them.'

⁵¹ On the early Roman rite of baptism, see *DACL* II/1, cols. 297–309 [P. de Puniet]; Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne*, pp. 567–624; and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', pp. 238–47. The rite of baptism as described here by Arnobius is similar to, but not identical with, that known from other, more reliable sources, such as the *Epistula ad Senarium* [CPL 950] by John the Deacon (subsequently Pope John I (523–6)), ed. A. Wilmart, *Analecta Reginensia*, Studi e testi LIX (Rome, 1933), pp. 170–9, and *PL* LIX, cols. 399–408.

⁵² For the house of the urban prefect (Chromatius), see M. C. Cartocci, 'Domus: Chromatius', *LTUR* II, p. 80. We subsequently learn that this house was fitted with a magnificent glass room (*holovitrium*) for purposes of astronomical observation (see c. 54). The twelfth-century topographical guide known as the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* located this house in the Trastevere, 'At S. Stefano in Piscina, the Palace of the Prefect Chromatius and a temple which is called *olovitrium*, made entirely of glass and gold by mathematical design, where there was an astrograph with all the signs of the heavens (and) which was destroyed by St Sebastian together with Tiburtius, the son of Chromatius' (ed. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, II, pp. 642–3); but it is obvious that the description of the *holovitrium* derives from the present *passio*. The precise location of the house, whether in Trastevere or elsewhere, is unknown. *Piscina* could conceivably refer to one of the cisterns at the termination of the Aqua Traiana in Trastevere; and for the possible location of this church of S. Stefano, see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 482.

33. As Nicostratus the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*) returned to his house together with Claudius the prison registrar (*commentariensis*), he began to relate all these events, and how St Sebastian was thoroughly Christian even though he was a friend of the emperors, and was perfect in his knowledge of theology, and how he had called back the souls of Christians through his admonitions, and that he had taught through entirely appropriate arguments that this life is fleeting and imaginary, and that even while one thinks it is being maintained it is being taken away. He also reported how a light coming suddenly from the sky had hallowed him [Sebastian], and how Sebastian had made his wife, who had been mute for six years, able to speak.

34. When Nicostratus had related all these events to Claudius, Claudius fell at the feet of Nicostratus, saying: 'I have two sons from my deceased wife, of whom one is assailed by the disease of dropsy, and the other is covered by various sores: I ask that you order them to be visited (by him). For I do not doubt that that man [Sebastian], who was able to make your wife speak after six years, could, if he wished, bring it about that health would return to my sons.' While saying these things he rushed back to his own house, and had his two sons brought into his presence, and bringing them into the house where God's saints [the Christians] were gathered, he threw his sons before their feet, saying: 'No traces whatsoever of doubt remained in my heart, but rather, believing with all my heart that Christ, Whom you worship, is Himself the true God, I brought here to you my two offspring, believing that through you they could be freed from the danger of death.' All the saints of God said at once: 'All those whom sickness of any kind detains today, will be cured, as soon as they have become Christians.'

35. And when Claudius had shouted out that he believed and desired to become a Christian, St Polycarp ordered everyone to give their names (as preliminary to baptism).⁵³ Tranquillinus, the father of Marcellianus and Marcus, gave his name first of all. After him six of their friends, namely Ariston, Crescentianus, Eutychianus, Urban, Vitalis, and Justus; after these, Nicostratus the head of the bureau (*primiscrinus*), and Castorius his brother, and Claudius the prison registrar (*commentariensis*). After all these, Felicissimus and Felix, the sons of Claudius. After them Marcia, the mother of Marcellianus and Marcus, together with their wives and children; and also Symphorosa the wife of Claudius, and Zoe the wife of Nicostratus. And thereafter the entire household (of slaves) who were in the house of Nicostratus, some thirty-three persons of either sex and of every age; and then all the rest, who were being detained there and had been brought out of the filth of the prison, some sixteen souls.

⁵³ On the ceremony of *nomendatio*, see Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 242.

36. Accordingly, all these sixty-eight persons were baptized by Polycarp the priest, and were received by St Sebastian; Beatrix and Lucina were made sponsors of the women.⁵⁴ First of all, as soon as he [Polycarp] anointed in the name of the holy trinity the sons of Claudius—the one suffering from dropsy, the other covered with sores—they were raised up from the baptismal font cured, so that not a trace remained in them of their previous illness. After these youngsters Tranquillinus, the father of the saints Marcellianus and Marcus, who had been so oppressed by the pain of gout and arthritis in his hands and feet, that, as was previously mentioned, he could hardly be transported in the hands of others. When they stripped him of his clothing,⁵⁵ and he said that he was being racked by intolerable pain, Polycarp the priest asked him: ‘Tranquillinus, if you believe with all your heart that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, can confer health on you, and can grant you forgiveness for all your sins, say so in your own words.’ Tranquillinus replied: ‘I both desire and believe that forgiveness alone (may) be given for my sins. Moreover, even if after the purification of this baptism I shall be in pain, I shall not be in any further doubts about faith in Christ. For, believing with my whole heart, I proved it; I agreed in my mind that the Son of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can grant salvation to souls and bodies, and recall them from eternal death to everlasting life.’ When he had said this out loud, all the saints poured out tears of joy, and asked the Lord that the result of his faith be revealed. Therefore St Polycarp, the confessor and priest, as soon as he had anointed him with the oil of chrism, asked him once again if he believed in the Father and Son and Holy Ghost; as soon as he replied ‘I believe’, his hands, which had been constricted with knots [i.e. by arthritis] were released, and his knees as well as the soles of his feet were made healthy, so that he could descend like a child into the baptismal font on renewed feet, shouting out and saying: ‘You are the One and True God, of Whom this wretched world is ignorant.’

37. With Tranquillinus in his turn having been baptized, all the rest were baptized, as was fitting, and for the ten days which remained of the delay which they had earned, they spent their days and nights in hymns and chants in praise of God, and just like loyal soldiers they prepared their minds for

⁵⁴ As Sebastian acts as sponsor to the men (the technical term is *patrinus*), Beatrix and Lucina act as sponsors (*matrinae*) to the women. On sponsorship in the early Church, see *DACL* XIII/2, cols. 2236–40 [H. Leclercq], s.v. ‘Parrain et marraine’, and J. H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1986), pp. 83–116 (‘The Sponsorship of Adults’). For Lucina, see also c. 88 with n. 103.

⁵⁵ As part of the baptismal service; in preparation for baptism catechumens removed their ‘death-bringing and carnal clothing’ (*depositis morticinis et carnalibus indumentis*), so that, when their old life had been stripped away, they stood naked and ready for baptism: see John the Deacon, *Epistula ad Senarium*, c. 6 (*PL* LIX, col. 403), and discussion by Heid, ‘Die Taufe in Rom’, p. 244 (‘Entkleidung’).

fighting for the name of Christ as they set out to do battle in their martyrdom, such that the love of martyrdom burned both in women and children, and they prepared themselves one after the other for confessing the holy name in battle against devilish forces.

38. Therefore, when the days of the agreed adjournment had expired, Agrestius Chromatius, the urban prefect of Rome, ordered Tranquillinus, the father of Marcellianus and Marcus, to come to him. When he enquired about the decision regarding his sons, Tranquillinus replied: 'No word from my mouth is sufficient for expressing thanks for your kindnesses. For if the reins of your government had not stayed the current sentences, I would have lost my sons and my sons would not have me as their father. All those whom fatherly love possesses and the goad of charity pricks congratulate me; even your Excellence would rejoice with me, when life is bestowed on those about to die, and happiness is returned to those (who are) distressed, security restored to those (who are) anxious.'

39. Then the prefect, assuming that his sons would wish to bow their necks to idols, said: 'Let the due incense be offered tomorrow to the divinities by your sons; through this you will remain unscathed for your sons, and your sons will be returned to you.' On hearing this Tranquillinus said: 'Most illustrious of men, if you wish to weigh the scales of your investigation with equal balance in respect of me and my sons, you will be able to recognize that this word "Christian" is of great value.' The prefect said: 'You are mad, Tranquillinus.' Tranquillinus replied: 'I have experienced madness, both of soul and body; but as soon as I believed in Christ, I received the sanity both of my soul and of my body.'

40. The prefect said: 'As it seems to me, I am understood to have granted an adjournment to your wicked sons, so that, not only would you not remove them from error, but that they would entangle you in their errors.' Tranquillinus said: 'By your glorious self, investigate the name of this "error", and see what acts are designated by the name of "error".' The prefect said: 'You tell me what acts receive the name of "error".' Tranquillinus said: 'The first error is to abandon the way of life, and to advance happily along the way of death.' The prefect said: 'And what is this "way of death"?' Tranquillinus said: 'Does it not seem to you to be the way of death, to impose the name of the deity on dead men, and to adore their representations in wood and stone?'

41. The prefect said: 'And therefore those whom we worship are not gods?' Tranquillinus said: 'They are not gods to the extent that is read in publicly available books—how wickedly they were conceived, and how they have wicked and cruel and pernicious parents, and how wickedly and deceitfully and fraudulently they live; and how wretchedly they die.'⁵⁶ Before Saturn ruled

⁵⁶ The recital of the sins committed by the pagan gods, according to mythology, is a frequent topos in Roman *passiones*; in addition to the present chapter, see the lengthy denunciation of pagan gods in the *passiones* of Caecilia (IV.20) and Chrysanthus and Daria (X.10–12).

the people of Crete, and ate the flesh of his sons, was he not a god in heaven?—or did the island of Crete have a king, and the heavens did not have a god? He errs greatly who thinks that Jupiter his son can command thunderbolts, a little man in whom malice and wantonness reigned. Whom did he not persecute, he who did not even spare his own father? Or what filthy deed did he not perpetrate, who took his own sister as wife? In the forum, in public places, in homes, and in every place we read that the foul Juno rejoiced that she was both his sister and his wife; and the foul and incestuous distinction of Ganymede, who was raped, is not denied by those by whom Jupiter is worshipped.⁵⁷ Do you not therefore err, Sublime Sir, when you worship such (gods) as Roman laws demand should be condemned for the nature of their crimes and, having abandoned Almighty God Who reigns in heaven, you say to a stone, “You are my god”, and say to the wood, “Help me”?

42. The prefect said: ‘From the moment you began to blaspheme the gods, and to withdraw from their worship, from that moment the Roman world has been afflicted with disasters.’ Tranquillinus replied: ‘It is not true. For if you examine the *Decades* produced by the pen of Livy,⁵⁸ you will find there men putting incense on (the shrine) of Jupiter, and that on the same day three thousand young men of the Roman army were killed.⁵⁹ But you have not forgotten that the Gauls from Cisalpine Gaul even occupied the Capitol and subjected the entire Roman army to ridicule.⁶⁰ The Roman world suffered

⁵⁷ The mythological allusions are to Vergil: *Aeneid* i. 23 (Ganymede) and i. 42 (Juno).

⁵⁸ Livy’s vast history *Ab urbe condita* originally consisted of 142 books; but only the first part of it, roughly one quarter, has survived intact in so-called ‘decades’ (groups of ten books), of which only three complete ‘decades’ have come down to us: First Decade (Books 1–10), Third Decade (Books 21–30), Fourth Decade (Books 31–40), and part of the Fifth (Books 41–5): see *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds et al. (Oxford, 1983), pp. 205–14. It is not possible to be certain whether the author of the present *passio*, Arnobius the Younger, writing probably in the 430s, had more of Livy’s work at his disposal than we do, but it is worth remarking that his is the earliest recorded indication that the work circulated in ‘decades’. The references which he makes to Livy arguably pertain to episodes in the First and Fourth Decades (see below, nn. 59 and 60). In any case, this reference in Arnobius the Younger is to be seen as a reflex of the early fifth-century revival of interest in Livy sponsored by Symmachus (who claimed to be having a complete copy of Livy prepared: *Ep.* ix. 13) and the Nicomachi: see Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 498–526 (‘The Livian Revival’).

⁵⁹ This reference to Livy is problematical: for if it supposedly pertains to an episode in one of the surviving books of Livy’s *Ab urbe condita*, there appear to be none in which the destruction of 3,000 Roman troops is preceded by the description of a sacrifice to Jupiter (though it could easily be assumed that generals of the Roman army would always have sacrificed before engaging in battle). There are two places where the loss of 3,000 Roman troops is explicitly mentioned: *Ab urbe condita* xxxiii. 36. 4, describing a slave insurrection in Etruria (196 BC), in which a certain Corolamus caught the troops of Marcellus by surprise and slaughtered 3,000 men, including such notables as T. Sempronius Gracchus and M. Iunius Silanus (‘Corolamus quidam, cum magna manu adortus ad tria milia hominum occidit’); cf. also xlii. 7. 10 (‘amplius tria milia militum amissa’).

⁶⁰ The sack of Rome in 390 BC by Brennus and the Gauls is described in the First Decade of Livy: see *Ab urbe condita* v. 38.

various famines and indescribable plagues, various captivities, various spillings of blood, before men worshipped the one God. Now, however, since the time that the invisible and true God began to be worshipped by believers, the Roman empire rejoices in extended peace. But what is bad, is that God, Who provides this situation, is not acknowledged; but whatsoever is provided by the Creator, is ascribed to His creature.'

43. The prefect said: 'If the god who provides something for human benefit is to be worshipped, nothing but the sun will be deemed to be god, which with its appearance causes the bowels of the earth to grow, so that it brings forth seeds (it has) received, and restores grains of its inborn offspring in the stalk, and provides light and renewal and energy for all the benefits of our well-being.' Tranquillus said: 'Even in this there is unlimited error. For if today someone should grant to his clients what is requested by way of his slave, it is infinite folly, if the person who made the grant is neglected and the slave through whom he made the grant is honoured. And in order to explain the point of this comparison: when ships bring food to the Romans, are thanks given to the ships rather than to the emperors? If, therefore, men ascribe the supply of provisions not to the sailors but to the emperors, how much more are thanks due to God alone, at Whose command these elements serve our needs, and the sun itself always sinks every day into the land and the sea at the end of the day, and is revealed again with the renewal of daylight?'

44. The prefect said: 'If therefore He Whom you worship is one and invisible, do you not worship Christ, Whom the Jews crucified?' Tranquillinus said: 'Rightly do you ask about this, if you are aiming to become a believer. For to unbelievers, everything which they do not want seems pointless. Once the will of mortals goes headlong into decline, everything which it disparages it wants to be disparaged; and it wants everything which it praises to be praised by everyone. But the wise man strives to assign either blame or praise, depending on the merit of each particular case.' The prefect said: 'I am asking you about your Christ. If that which is not seen by these eyes is worshipped by you, do you not worship Christ, Who is seen, and heard, and interrogated, and all things which pertain to human weakness are read of as having been involved in His martyrdom?' Tranquillinus said: 'Listen to the (following) simile and understand the truth. In a word, if today you were to see your ring, which has on it a precious jewel, in the sewer, or lying on a dung-heap, and you were to send your slaves to retrieve it: they are not able to free it, but while they are trying to grasp it they dirty themselves in various ways; later, you yourself, taking off these silken garments which you wear, dress yourself in a humble tunic and, climbing down into the sewer you put your hands into the excrement, and retrieve with your hands the ring and the jewel; in the presence of all your friends, (whom) you invite to dinner, you rejoice over the ring and the jewel, because they have been rescued from the overpowering filth.' The prefect said: 'For what purpose did you bring up this simile?' Tranquillinus

replied: 'So that I could show you that we worship one invisible God.' The prefect said: 'And what is the gold? or what is the jewel, which was lying in the excrement?' Tranquillinus replied: 'The gold is the human body, but the jewel is the soul, which is enclosed in the body. The body and soul together make up one man, in the way that the gold and the jewel are acknowledged to constitute one ring. But however precious to you the ring may be, a man is a hundredfold more precious and dear to Christ. You sent your slaves, so they could retrieve the ring from the filth, and on no account could they extract it. God sent his prophets from heaven, telling them to retrieve the human race from the filth of this world; and they were not able to do this by any means at all. You took off your golden garments, and, dressed in lowly clothing, descended into the sewer, and placed your hands in the filth, so that you could retrieve the ring from the filth: and the Majesty shed Himself of the brilliance of his divinity, not however abandoning heavenly things; and He dressed Himself in the lowly clothing of our body, and, descending from heaven into the sewer of this world here, He put His hands into the filth of our suffering; and, taking on Himself the suffering which was the result of our own doings, He did not restore it to the glory of His fingers. For we who wallow in the squalor of this world as a result of our disbelief, when through our faith we have been cleansed of the filth, we are restored to His divine hands, just like your ring. Could your slaves, who denied that you were their lord when they saw you in lowly dress, not have been executed for their disobedience? Likewise those who deny that Christ is their Lord, for the reason that He divested Himself of His majesty and took on the appearance of a slave, can in no way evade the punishment of eternal fire. Accordingly, then, the water of the eternal font assists us who believe in Him, so that the eternal fire is extinguished by the eternal font, and disbelief is overcome by faith.'

45. The prefect said: 'As far as I can see, you are proved to have sought an adjournment not so that you could dissuade your sons from their intentions, but so that on reflection you could present these old women's fables to my tribunal.' Tranquillinus said: 'The disciples of Christ do not reflect on what will happen in the presence of judges. He warned us beforehand, saying: "When they hand you over to the authorities of this world because of my name, do not worry about how to speak or what to say: what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes. It is not you who speak, but the spirit of God, Who speaks in you."⁶¹ I discovered my Creator, therefore, not by reflecting but by believing; and I who was crippled and shattered by the pain of gout and arthritis in my feet and hands, as soon as I believed in Christ, I regained the health of all my limbs as if I were a young boy. In my mind it is established, therefore, that He Who created me deigned to renew me, that just

⁶¹ Matt. 10: 19.

as He granted the restoration of my body, so He promised to grant life to the soul after this (life)—if, however, in doubt and dread I am not broken by men's tortures, but, persevering in the confession of His name, I preserve the unblemished faith which God caused me to discover.'

46. The prefect said: 'You are unaware, Tranquillinus, of what great anger of the unconquerable emperors rages against the Christians; and accordingly you proceed confidently, as it seems to you, without fear.' Tranquillinus said: 'It is a foolish fear, whereby human displeasure is more feared than divine (displeasure). If we were to arrive in the midst of barking dogs, and they began in wild fury to attack us with their bites, could they remove from us the fact that we are rational human beings, given that they are dogs, and are both irrational and insane? And so those who become angered at us (who are) rightly believing (in Christ), can rage indeed, and inflict us with unjust tortures; yet they can never take from our hearts the fact that we believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Creator, and rejoice that He is our Redeemer and Renovator.' Then the prefect ordered him to be removed by the prison officials (*commentarii*),⁶² saying: 'I shall hear your case in the next session.'

47. After this he sent for him, and ordered that he be brought to him secretly at night, and, offering him a vast weight of gold, said: 'Show me the medication from which you recovered your health.' Tranquillinus said to him: 'You should know that those people, who think that His mercy can be bought and sold, are to suffer the mighty rage and fury of God. Whence, if you wish to be relieved from the pain of gout, believe that Christ is the Son of God, and you will be freed, and will be as healthy as you see me today. For I could barely be transported in the hands (of others), and for eleven years, with tight knots of pain throughout all the joints in my body, bread could barely be put into my mouth by the hands of others: immediately as I believed that Christ was the true God, I received the joys of my health, and I am (now) in good condition, because I acknowledged that the true God was my Saviour.'

48. Then the prefect dismissed him, saying: 'Bring to me the person who made you a Christian so that, if he should promise well-being to me, I too could become a Christian.' Tranquillinus, going at once to St Polycarp the priest, reported to him everything which was said and done; and, taking him secretly into the house, he presented him to the prefect's inspection. The prefect said to him: 'Although the emperors' serious concern is infected by the Christians, yet for the sake of recovering my health I shall offer you up to half the value of the goods of my patrimony, if my limbs could be released from this constriction of swelling in my joints.' Then St Polycarp said, smiling: 'The Lord Jesus Christ is powerful enough to open the doors of your ignorance, and may reveal to you that He is the restorer of your body. But those who

⁶² The *commentarii* are agents of the *commentariensis*, the prison registrar; see *TLL* III, col. 1857 ('*officium commentariensis*') and Souter, p. 62.

offer money, or receive it when it has been offered, not only bring no medicine to sufferers, but even take on themselves an incurable disease.’ The prefect says to him: ‘Tell me what I am to do, that I may achieve what I hope for.’ Polycarp says to him: ‘If you will believe with all your heart, in the way that Tranquillinus believed, you will be saved.’ The prefect says to him: ‘How am I to believe in the manner indicated?’ Then St Polycarp catechized him, and imposed on him a fast of three days. And calling St Sebastian to him, for three days and three nights he fasted with him; and they both prayed with tears, that the Lord would demonstrate the trustworthiness of His name in the salvation of someone wishing to believe.

49. Therefore, when the third day, which had been appointed, had arrived, they all come in haste to the house of the presiding prefect. On entering they said: ‘Peace be to your belief.’ And he greeted them very formally in turn; and he asked them to sit down near him, and he said: ‘The argument which proceeded from the mouth of Tranquillinus is made manifest by the witness of my own eyes. For I see him fully healed, whom I had (previously) seen crippled with gout and arthritis. On enquiring as to the kind of medicine by which he had been healed, I received from him a reply like this: “As long as I was placing my faith in idols, I was crippled and debilitated with intense weakness; but when I learned of the one God in heaven from the revelations of Christians, I denied everything which I had worshipped without cause, and entrusted the faith of my heart to Christ. As soon as I confessed that the only true God reigned in the heavens, immediately my health, which I had lost for eleven years, returned to me, and all illness was straightway banished from me.” I heard this with my ears, proved it with my eyes, believed it in my heart. It remains for you to do to me what you did to Tranquillinus, so that I can receive the health of my body.’

50. Polycarp the priest said: ‘If the soul of man does not suffer passing pains, what is to be done about those pains, to which no end ever comes, no conclusion at all is given? For these (earthly) pains carry the likeness of those (eternal) pains, and as the living fire differs from a picture of it, so there is so great a difference between the pains which the body now suffers, and those which the soul is to suffer, if in ignorance of its creator it shall complete the spectacle of the present life. Deal first in our presence with those (earthly) pains, and be anxious about that (future) pain, which has ever-burning fire, and ever-gnawing worms.’

51. Then Chromatius, the urban prefect of Rome, together with his only son Tiburtius, gave (Polycarp) his name, saying: ‘It is appropriate for you to be certain concerning my faith, in which I hope that my son may become a Christian with me.’ St Sebastian said: ‘See that you are not hoping to become a Christian, induced only by the recovery of your body, but you should rather make your mind pure to see the source of truth through the hope of eternal life. For unless you should acknowledge who is your creator, you cannot find

the health which you seek.' Chromatius said: 'Do we not therefore see peasants and simple men who are Christians, such that among a thousand men you would scarcely find even one who could attain to skill in reasoning? Could all these people participate in this interrogation when they become Christians?' St Sebastian said: 'This reply of yours confirms the argument of our party. For from the beginning of the world God had business with farmers and shepherds, and coming at the end of the world He did not choose grammarians and orators, but fishermen and simple souls, and He conveyed to them His message.'

52. Chromatius said: 'Why, therefore, do you say that I ought first to recognize Who my Creator is, (and that) unless I acknowledge Him I cannot recover my health?' St Sebastian said: 'Because you worshipped many gods and goddesses. Therefore unless you expel them from your heart, and smash their idols, and recognize the one and true God, you cannot find life and health.' Chromatius said: 'Indicate to me therefore who is the one and true God.' St Sebastian replied: 'If you should send your slave to draw water, when he comes to the well, he looks first to see that no dirt is lurking within the flask, and he does not dare to put water in the flask, unless he sees that it is free of dirt. How can we entrust the well of truth to you, unless you first make yourself a stranger to the filth and squalor of idols?' Chromatius said: 'And by what arrangement can I be made their stranger?' St Sebastian said: 'Give us your authority, that we may smash all the stone idols which we find in your house, that we may burn all wooden (idols), that we may melt down all gold and silver and bronze (idols), and divide up their proceeds among the needy.' Chromatius said: 'And when you have done these things, what benefit will accrue to me?' St Sebastian said: 'You will immediately gain the health of all your joints, by whose ligaments you are fettered; and like someone who has never suffered, you will begin to run on your feet; and to acknowledge that you have loved gods which are inimical to your health; but that your parent is He Who restores and saves you as soon as you discover His existence and worship.'

53. Chromatius said: 'Do not exert yourselves (to undertake) this destruction; rather I shall order my slaves, and they will destroy everything.' St Sebastian said: 'If doubting and timid and non-believing persons should break them, the devil will find an occasion for injuring them through some oversight on their part, and as soon as they have been injured, the unbelievers will say that they were injured because they smashed the idols. Someone is not killed by the arrowheads if he wears a breast-plate, for the army detachment that is skilled in battle makes use of a helmet and a shield and a spear; and from the protection and force provided by these weapons it acquires the boldness to strike, and does not turn its back. Similarly with the soldiers of God, who are armed with the shield of faith and are protected by the breastplate of Christ's armour: having the helmet of faith and salvation, it is safe for them to go into battle. For they fight fiercely and win convincingly,

because they engage tirelessly by day and night against the invisible enemy; and they are protected in all their body parts, being armed more with faith than with weaponry.' Chromatius said: 'Let it be the will of God, and yours.' Then St Polycarp the priest and the blessed Sebastian, girding themselves up, engaged in prayer; and after praying, and smashing more than two hundred idols, they began to give thanks to their own God.

54. After this they went up to Chromatius, saying to him: 'With us smashing the idols you ought to have received your health, unless perchance some vestiges of idolatry remain in your heart. For we have it as a certainty, that either there is something remaining which has not yet been smashed; or else, if everything *has* been smashed, reveal clearly to us what you are keeping in your heart.' Then he (said): 'I have a glass-covered room in which the science of the stars and practical astrology is skilfully represented, in the construction of which my father Tarquinius is known to have spent more than two hundred pounds of gold.' St Sebastian said to him: 'If you wish to preserve this intact, you are smashing yourself.' Chromatius said: 'What then? Are <not> astrology and the astronomical calendar (*ephemeris*)⁶³ consulted with regard to the performance of sacrifices, when through the passage of hours the course of months and years is studied only in them? And is the waxing and waning of the lunar globe <not> predicted by finger-counting, the teaching of science, (and) the computation of the calculus?' St Polycarp the priest said:⁶⁴ 'In that (science) are the (zodiacal) signs of Leo and Capricorn and Sagittarius and Scorpio and Taurus; in it the moon is (said to be) in Aries, the hour in Cancer, a star in Jupiter, the changes in Mercury, Mars in Venus; and the skill in (observing) all these monstrous demons is known to be odious to God. Thus Christians refuse them, not only so that they do not possess them, do not worship them, do not believe them, do not maintain them; but they do not even have as their friends those people who occupy their minds with these trifles. For all these things are the false attendant of deception: there is some likeness of truth in them, not truth itself.'

55. Chromatius says to him: 'What? Do they not sometimes foretell future events?' St Sebastian said: 'We know from Christ's revelation that all these things are thoroughly pointless and false; we shall now reveal this clearly to you.'⁶⁵ Order that a teacher of astrology come today; say to him, that you

⁶³ For the meaning of *ephemeris*, 'a book or calendar of mathematical or astronomical tables', see *TLL* V, col. 657.

⁶⁴ Polycarp's account of astrological signs is intentionally absurd, by way of ridiculing what Chromatius believes; Sebastian subsequently (c. 55) gives a reasoned refutation of astrology, based on the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones*.

⁶⁵ The remainder of this paragraph ('Order that a teacher...for saying what he wishes') is paraphrased from the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* x. 11. 2–8 (ed. B. Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, II. *Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung*, rev. F. Paschke, GCS LI (Berlin, 1965), pp. 331–2); see also H. J. Schoeps, 'Astrologisches im pseudoklementinischen Roman', *Vigiliae*

have been struggling for some time under adverse circumstances, and ask through what stars this evil has befallen you; his reply will no doubt be that your time has been determined by the malevolence of Mars, or else that Saturn was returning (to its station), or that your year was taken over by (its) opposite, or that climacterics were born to you in the centre, or else it was bound up with evil, or else was invisible, or was in the ascendant, or that its course around you was immobile in the stars. When he has said these and similar things, he is attempting to assign and prove to you something corresponding to reason. Then go and consult another astrologer, to whom you will say of this same period and these same hours that they have been overflowing for you with good fortune: immediately you will see him present to you countless rational explanations, by which he will prove that good things ought to have befallen you at those times. For he has a chart⁶⁶ brought together from everywhere, in which he notices various things, from which he gets the rationale for saying what he wishes.'

56. 'For when they cannot foresee the future at all, they speak of "climacterics", that is, of uncertain things which evade the nature of the situation.⁶⁷ People born at different times have died in one shipwreck; and of those born at the same hour of day or night, one is reduced to penury, but the other ascends to the throne; and in the one battle an innumerable multitude is slain; and on one day, indeed at one moment, in one house, (there are) two women: one of them turns out to be thoroughly chaste, the other licentious: if the stars conferred the character of each of them, the whore is not to be blamed, nor the chaste one to be praised. Lawgivers and emperors punish infringements of their laws, and for that reason there is the forum, for that reason the judge, for that reason laws: so that the just may rightly be praised and the wicked deservedly punished. And I do not wish you to think it superfluous that you

Christianae 5 (1951), 88–100, esp. 94–5, 98–9, and Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, p. 80, n. 106.

⁶⁶ Translating *circulum* as 'chart'. It is clear from the context that some sort of astrological device, (say) a chart or diagram of the constellations, is in question; see *TLL* III, col. 1109, which cites Rufinus' translation of the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* x. 11. 8 ('circulus...est aequaliter ex omni parte collectus secundum mathesin' (ed. Rehm, p. 332), 'the *circulus* is put together from every source in accordance with that science'.

⁶⁷ This sentence too derives from Rufinus' translation of the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones* x. 12. 7: 'et hoc est quod ignorantes astrologi invenerunt sibi ut climacteras dicerent, rei scilicet incertae perfugia' (ed. Rehm, p. 334). For the meaning of *climactericae*, cf. *TLL* III, col. 1349, which cites Rufinus: 'astrologi *climacteras* inducunt ut de rebus incertis scientiam fingunt', 'astrologers invoke *climacterics* so as to feign knowledge of uncertain things' (ix. 9. 12), and Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis* viii. 26, *habebunt climacteras et pericula*, where the term refers to 'difficulties', 'problems of difficult interpretation' (cf. J. R. Bram, *Ancient Astrology, Theory and Practice: Matheseos Libri VIII* by Firmicus Maternus (Park Ridge, NJ, 1975), p. 291: 'they will have *difficulties* and dangers', as well as Schoeps, 'Astrologisches im pseudoklementinischen Roman', p. 97).

are still waiting to be healed. For if you were fully to cast off the rites of the enemy of the human race, you would learn in yourself what is true.'

57. On hearing these things, Chromatius said: 'That really is a true God, Who is shown to have worshippers such as yourselves. For all your discussion is brimming with reason to such an extent, that it would incline the minds of sheep to true reason. And so let even that, for which I am seen to have made an exception regarding the decoration of my house, be demolished, so it will not hinder the soundness of my health. For I believe, and this is my faith, that the law of Christianity abominates and prohibits all these things; if I remove myself entirely from them, I shall deserve to acquire both present and future well-being.'

58. On hearing these things Tiburtius, his son, said: 'On no account do I allow this precious and outstanding and incomparable work to be destroyed. But so that I do not seem to come here in order to oppose my father's health, let two ovens be brought here and lit in front of the door of the glass-house, and when it is destroyed by them [Polycarp and Sebastian], and my father has not regained his health, let them both be placed in the individual burning ovens.' Hearing this, his father forbade it to happen. But the saints not only did not fear their promised death, but even firmly urged that the ovens be prepared.

59. Then they went to all the crystalline and glass idols, and all the mechanical apparatus; and suddenly, while they were being broken up by the hands of the saints, a young man appeared before the eyes of Chromatius, whose face shone with flaming brightness, and he said to him: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom you believe, sent me, so that you could regain the health of all your limbs.' Being restored fully to health at these words, he began to run after the young man, so that he could kiss his feet. But he said to him: 'See that you do not touch me, because the purification of baptism has not yet cleansed you from the filth of the idols.' Seeing these things, Tiburtius, his son, fell at the feet of St Polycarp. Chromatius the prefect himself embraced the feet of Sebastian, and they both [Chromatius and Tiburtius] shouted out in unison: 'Christ is the true God, the true and almighty only-begotten Son of God, Whom you, His good ministers, are proclaiming.'

60. Then the blessed Sebastian said to Chromatius: 'As you yourself know, I am chief of staff of the First Cohort; but I decided not to know, nor do I wish to know, whether this military service is (fitting for) a man. For this reason alone I wished to remain hidden beneath the military cloak, so that I could shore up the minds of those in doubt, and could make those wavering firm (in their faith), so that those whom faith had made into warriors would not give in to the pains of martyrdom. But you, who are at the apex of the highest authority, cannot remove yourself from (public) spectacles, nor be absent from business involving judicial process. Therefore request a successor for yourself by feigning illness, so that you can be free of the business of the world

so as to take on the beginnings of the future life, so that, by being born again in this second nativity, you may be made the offspring of eternal parents.' That same day he sent (a message) to his friends in the palace, through whom he received written testimonials [i.e. relieving him of his duties], and took on the apprenticeship in divine soldiery even before he was baptized.

61. What shall I say concerning the perfection of his faith, and of his penetrating intelligence against the contentions of unbelievers? The following chapter makes this clear. For at the outset, (before) he was anointed with the waters of the sacred font, the faith in his soul shone out plainly. When asked if he believed, he said: 'I believe.' And again, when asked whether he would renounce all idols, he said: 'I renounce them'.⁶⁸ The priest's interrogation proceeded, and he was asked whether he would renounce all his sins. And he said: 'You ought (indeed) to have asked me these things before I enter the halls of the king of heaven. Now, since I am not (yet) baptized, I shall put on my clothing again, so that I can grant all those things at which I was (formerly) angered, and restore title-deeds to my debtors; if I forcibly took anything from anyone, I shall order it to be returned to him intact. After the death of my wife I had two mistresses, and I shall hand over a dowry to them and their husbands; I shall remove the attachments incumbent on my (public) activities from all obligations, whether servile, free-born, private, or public; and finally I shall promise to renounce all diabolical sins and worldly delights.' Polycarp the priest says: 'The heavenly water (of baptism) will anoint you as a more blessed man, when you have done with great speed those things which you say that you are to do of your own free will: for the period of Lent is imposed on those who are to be baptized, for the reason that over so many days they may learn that they are to renounce all the wiles of the Enemy and all the business of the world, if they truly wish to become Christians.'

62. Then Tiburtius, an extremely wise young man, said: 'Father, if you are asking for time to (enable you to) renounce all these business affairs, I, who until now was going to take on the business of the marketplace, renounce the single intention of taking it on; and (by the same token) I, who was to be called to do the business of mortal men, shall take on Christianity in order to do the work of angels, since I am beginning to be one of the number of those who receive eternal life and are made advocates of holy behaviour.' Then the blessed Sebastian embraced him: when St Polycarp had baptized him, he [Sebastian] was made the father of his adoption.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Arnobius' wording here adumbrates that of the baptismal service, as preserved for example in the Gelasian Sacramentary (Mohlberg et al., *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*, p. 74 [§§449–50]). On the 'baptismal questions' in the present *passio*, see Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen', p. 126 [§29]. For this phase of the baptismal service, called the *abrenuntiatio*, see Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne*, pp. 600–1, and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', pp. 244–5.

⁶⁹ That is to say, Sebastian has stood as sponsor (*pater susceptionis*, properly *patrinus*) to the baptism of Tiburtius; on the practice of sponsorship in the early Church, see above, n. 54.

63. Therefore, when a few days had passed, and all earthly business had been duly renounced by Chromatius, he took on the novelty of holy baptism; and, together with him, one thousand four hundred persons of either sex from his household, whom he had first released from the bond of servitude with the boon of manumission, and furnished with excellent gifts, saying this: 'Those who begin to have God as their father should not be slaves of a man.'

64. Now the pope of the city of Rome was named Gaius, a man of great wisdom and great courage, in the times of the emperors Carinus, Diocletian, and Maximian.⁷⁰ But Diocletian was at Rome with Maximian;⁷¹ Carinus however was stationed in Gaul with the entire army;⁷² and as a result of his outlook Diocletian's persecution of Christians had slowly begun, because Carinus had several friends, whom the profession of this association adorned.⁷³

65. And so, when Carinus had been killed in the city of Mainz,⁷⁴ with Maximian and Aquilinus being the consuls,⁷⁵ there was so great a

⁷⁰ The dates of Pope Gaius (282–95): according to the *Liber pontificalis*, Gaius was 'born in Dalmatia of the family of the emperor Diocletian, son of Gaius, held the see 11 years 4 months 12 days. He was bishop in the time of <Carus and> Carinus, from 17 December in the second consulship of Carus and that of Carinus (283) to 22 April in the fourth [*recte* sixth] of Diocletian and second of Constantius [296]' (ed. Mommsen, p. 39; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 161; trans. Davis p. 12). Carinus was emperor 283–5; he was consul in 283, 284, and 285. Arnobius seems to think that Carinus, Diocletian, and Maximian were all emperors together; in fact, Diocletian became emperor only in 284 after the brother of Carinus, Numerian, had been murdered; Carinus himself was killed in battle in the summer of 285. See *SHA*, 'Carus et Carinus et Numerianus'; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 38 (trans. Bird, pp. 40–1), and Eutropius, *Breviarium* ix. 18–20 (trans. Bird, pp. 60–1).

⁷¹ The times when Diocletian and Maximian were together in Rome: to judge from the evidence assembled by Barnes, *New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, pp. 47–87, esp. 49–61, Diocletian and Maximian were *never* together in Rome while Carinus (who was killed in battle against Diocletian in the summer of 285) was still alive; the only time when they were certainly together in Rome was in November and December 303, the occasion of Diocletian's *vicennalia*.

⁷² The source for this information might be *SHA*, 'Carus et Carinus et Numerianus', c. 7: 'ut Carinum ad Gallias tuendas cum viris lectissimis destinaret [*sc.* Carus]'; Carus took Numerian with him east to Persia; cf. also *ibid.* c. 16.

⁷³ The source for the information about Carinus's Christian associates is unknown; nothing of the sort is found in *SHA*, Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, or Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*.

⁷⁴ Carinus was killed *not* at Mainz (*civitate Maguntiaco*), but at the river *Margus* in Upper Moesia (now Serbia). See Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, trans. Bird, p. 163: 'probably in the summer of 285 Carinus and Diocletian faced each other across the river *Margus* (now the Morava) in Upper Moesia (Serbia) near Belgrade. Carus' army was larger and initially successful, but some of his officers were disaffected and he was assassinated by a tribune whose wife he had allegedly seduced.' See also *SHA*, 'Carus et Carinus et Numerianus', c. 18: 'sed ultima pugna apud Margum commissa victus occubuit', with Magie's footnote (p. 445): 'At the mouth of the river of the same name (mod. Morava), a tributary of the Danube below Belgrade. The scene of the battle is described in Eutropius, *Breviarium* ix. 20, as between Viminacium (Kostolac, near the mouth of the Morava) and Aureus Mons (Oresac), about twenty-five miles further west.' It is not clear how *Margum* could have been corrupted to *Maguntiacum*.

⁷⁵ There is some confusion here: in 286 one of the consuls was Vettius Aquilinus, the other M. Iunius Maximus, *not* Maximian: see Bagnall et al., *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, p. 286. Maximian did not share any of his nine consulships with someone called Aquilinus, who is otherwise unattested (*PLRE* I, p. 92).

persecution⁷⁶ that no one could buy or sell anything unless he was seen to have burned incense to the statues set up in the very (market)place to which he had come for the sake of making purchases.⁷⁷ All around the apartment blocks, around the public squares, and around the public fountains too, were stationed agents who would give neither permission to purchase anything, nor even the right to draw up water, except to those who had made an offering to the idols.

66. Then having taken the advice of St Gaius the bishop, Chromatius, an illustrious senator (*vir illustris*), took into his house all Christians, and fed them all, so that no one should give in to the necessity of making a sacrifice. But because there was such great impetus to the persecution that rumours regarding Christianity could not be concealed, Chromatius was given authorization, by an imperial rescript, that for the sake of improving his health he might spend time in Campania on the Bay of Naples, where he was the owner of an extensive estate, and he gave monies to every Christian willing to go with him in order to avoid the rage of the persecutors (in Rome). Then a dispute arose between St Polycarp and St Sebastian, as to which of the two should remain in Rome, and which would go with Chromatius, who had taken (responsibility for) so much of the Christian populace. The venerable pope Gaius said to the two arguing parties: 'While both of you are seeking the crown of martyrdom, you are abandoning the Christian populace. Whereupon it seems to me, brother Polycarp, both because you are keeping the straight path of the priesthood and because you are filled with the learning of God, that you should go at once in order to comfort the spirits of believers and to strengthen doubting minds.' When he heard this, Polycarp kept quiet, and bore with equanimity the pope's kindly decision. And then Sunday came, on which Bishop Gaius, performing God's liturgy within the house of Chromatius, spoke to everyone in these terms: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, being well aware of human weakness, established two positions for those believing in Him, namely those of confession and of martyrdom, so that those who despair of being able to undergo the burden of martyrdom may keep to the honour of

⁷⁶ In spite of the absurd chronology, it would seem that Arnobius was intending to evoke the so-called 'Great Persecution'. The 'Great Persecution' was initiated on 24 February 303 by the publication in Nicomedia of the 'First Edict of Persecution' (see Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, pp. 179–81). There was no recorded persecution during the period 260–303, and certainly none during the years which Arnobius implies (285–6; see nn. 74–5); see Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 99–119. In any case, the 'Great Persecution' soon came to an end in the West: it was suspended in Britain, Gaul, and Spain by Constantine immediately after his proclamation as Augustus at York (26 July 306), and was formally ended at the same time in Italy and Africa by Maxentius (the son of Maximian). On the 'Great Persecution' itself, which was most ferocious in the eastern empire, see Introduction, above, pp. 10–11.

⁷⁷ The requirement to sacrifice was stipulated only by the Fourth Edict of Persecution, issued probably in February 304; see De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 72–4. This stipulation was never enforced in the West.

confession, and, yielding their place⁷⁸ to the warriors, may retain their concern for the soldiers of Christ, who are setting off to fight for His name. Let those who wish set off with Chromatius and Tiburtius, and those who wish remain with me in this city. Geographical distances will not divide us whom the love of Christ binds together, nor will our eyes feel your absence, because we gaze on you with the sight of the inner man.'

67. As Pope Gaius was saying these and similar things, Tiburtius the distinguished senator (*vir clarissimus*)⁷⁹ shouted out, saying: 'I beseech you, father and bishop of bishops, not to allow me to turn my back on the persecutors. For it is extremely agreeable and desirable to me, if I can be killed as a soldier for the True God, so that I can achieve the glory of that life which no successor to me may ever snatch away, on which no time will ever place a limit.' Then St Gaius, rejoicing in the man's faith, poured out tears, praying that all those who remained would be victors in the struggle, achieving the glory of martyrdom.

68. The following persons had remained with the venerable Pope Gaius: Marcellianus and Marcus, and also their father, the distinguished senator (*vir clarissimus*) Tranquillinus; likewise St Sebastian, and the young man Tiburtius, attractive in person but even more attractive in his attitude, and Nicos-tratus the former head of the bureau (*primiscrinius*) with his brother Castorius and his wife Zoe; likewise Claudius with Victorinus his brother and with his son Symphorianus, who had been freed from the disease of dropsy.⁸⁰ These persons alone remained with Bishop Gaius as all <the others>⁸¹ set out with Chromatius. He [Gaius] consecrated Marcus and Marcellianus to the honour of the diaconate; and he made Tranquillinus, their father, a priest. And he made St Sebastian, who had been of much use to many people while hiding under the guise of a soldier, a 'protector of the Church' (*defensor ecclesiae*);⁸² he made all the rest of them subdeacons.

⁷⁸ Reading *locum* (a variant reading recorded by Bolland) for *latus*.

⁷⁹ Tiburtius belongs to the clarissimate by birthright, insofar as he is the son of Agrestius Chromatius, a *vir illustris* (the highest senatorial rank): sons of *illustres* became *clarissimi* by birthright (Jones, *LRE*, p. 529).

⁸⁰ There is confusion here. In c. 35 we were told that the sons of Claudius were named Felicissimus and Felix; there has been no previous mention of a son of Claudius named Symphorianus (reminiscent of Claudius' wife named Symphorosa?), or of a brother named Victorinus. Has Arnobius simply forgotten what he has previously written?

⁸¹ Supplying *aliis* after *universis*.

⁸² The *defensores ecclesiae* were lawyers who represented the temporal interests of the Church; as there was a deacon for each of the seven ecclesiastical regions of Rome, concerned with the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation, so there was a *defensor*, concerned with their legal rights (there is a helpful gloss to the term *defensor* in Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 238). The earliest reference to a *defensor* of the church occurs in the canons of the Council of Carthage (AD 407): 'ut dent facultatem defensores constituendi scholasticos' (PL LXVII, col. 214); by the time of Gregory the Great the post had become well established in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; see F. Martroye, 'Les "Defensores Ecclesiae" aux Ve et VIe siècles',

69. But because no safe place could be found to serve as a hiding-place, they all lived with Castulus, a certain Christian who was a house-steward of the imperial palace (*zetarius palatii*).⁸³ This Castulus remained there in the palace, in a lofty house on the upper level (of the Palatine).⁸⁴ This was proved to be a very suitable dwelling-place, because Castulus with all his servants was thoroughly Christian; and as for the edict which had been promulgated concerning sacrifices, while the fury was raging everywhere else, it remained concealed from those who were attached to the palace, because there could be no suspicion concerning them. As I said, all those who were living with Pope Gaius in the lodging of Castulus the house-steward, in the upper levels of the palace, were busied by day and night in weeping and wailing, in fasting and prayers, praying to the Lord that they be found worthy, through persistence in confessing Him, to be associated with the number of holy martyrs.

70. Religious men and women went up to them secretly, and obtained from the holy men various comforting cures. For the blessing of the cures attended them (because) they were strengthened in the durability of their faith and the sound foundation of their virtues. The eyes of blind persons were illuminated through their prayers, and sick persons healed, and demons were driven from bodies (which had been) possessed.

71. While these events were taking place, the blessed Tiburtius approached a man who had fallen from a great height, and had shattered his skull and all his limbs, so that the people whose son he was known to be were concerned only with his burial. Then he [Tiburtius] said to them as they wept: 'Permit me to chant some prayers over him; perhaps he will recover his health.' When they had all made way for Tiburtius, he drew near to him, and slowly recited over his wounds the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, his broken limbs and skull and all his inwards were strengthened and, as if nothing had happened to him, he was made whole.

72. When he had done these things he [Tiburtius] got ready to go. The parents [of the man] held him back, saying: 'Come back, and take him as

Revue historique du droit français et étranger, 4th ser. 2 (1923), 597–622; Balthasar Fischer, 'Die Entwicklung des Instituts der Defensores in der römischen Kirche. Eine Studie in Anschluss an Ordo Romanus I', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 48 (1934), 443–54, with discussion of St Sebastian at p. 446; and, more recently, G. D. Dunn, 'Innocent I's Letter to Lawrence: Photinians, Bonosians, and the *Defensores ecclesiae*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 33 (2012), 136–55, esp. 144–8. Sebastian would be an odd choice as *defensor ecclesiae*, since he had no legal training; but, as Fischer points out (*ibid.* pp. 447–52), the duties assigned to the appointment were not fully articulated until the time of Pope Gregory I.

⁸³ On the meaning of the word *zetarius* (more correctly spelled *diaetarius*, a variant of *diaetarcha*, as attested in *CIL* VI, nos. 5187, 8643, and 8644), see Souter, p. 101 (s.vv. 'diaetarchus', 'diaetarius'), and *TLL* V, col. 948.

⁸⁴ On the supposed location of the *domus Castuli*, see G. De Spirito, 'Domus: Castulus', *LTUR* II, p. 78. The present passage of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* is the only ancient source to mention this *domus*.

(your) slave, and we give you all our earthly goods, because you have restored to us alive our only son, (who was in effect) dead.’ He says to them: ‘If you will do the things which I shall tell you, I shall greatly value the price of his recovery.’ The man’s parents said to him [Tiburtius]: ‘If you would deign to accept us as your slaves, we cannot gainsay it—indeed we desire it, if you were to judge it appropriate.’ Then taking their hands he led them away from the crowds, and explained to them the power of the name of Christ. And seeing that their souls were firmly fixed in fear of the Lord, he led them to Pope Gaius, and said: ‘Venerable father, bishop of the divine law: here are some people whom Christ has acquired today through me, in whom my faith, like a small tree, first burst into fruit.’ Then St Gaius the bishop baptized them, that is, the young man with his parents, with all of them giving thanks to God.

73. But because it is a substantial undertaking if we wish to follow what and how great were the accomplishments which Christ worked through these (saints), let us simply explain how each one arrived at the palm of martyrdom. Blessed Zoe, on the feast day of the apostles [29 June], while she was praying at the *Confessio Petri*,⁸⁵ is trapped by some pagans lying in ambush and is led to the protector (*patronus*)⁸⁶ of the region of Naumachia,⁸⁷ and is urged to burn

⁸⁵ Zoe has apparently gone to the Vatican (see n. 87 on the Naumachia) to pray at the *Confessio Petri* in the basilica of St Peter on the Vatican. The term *confessio* was originally a name given to the place where a saint had been martyred, but typically referred to a location in a crypt beneath the main altar of the church bearing the martyr’s name (see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2503–8, esp. 2503). In the case of the Vatican, the tomb of St Peter was located in the necropolis beneath the vast basilica constructed by Constantine, as recovered by excavation between 1940 and 1949; the memorial site itself (*memoria*) was marked with a so-called *tropaion*, located directly beneath the papal altar in the present-day St Peter’s. The area enclosing this shrine is known as the *Confessio Petri*, and this is what Zoe visited. On this famous site, see Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St Peter*, esp. pp. 127–67, with figs. 8–9; A. Prandi, *La zona archeologica della Confessio Vaticana*, I. *I monumenti del II secolo* (Vatican City, 1958); Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St Peter and St Paul*, pp. 53–94 and 120–64, with figs. 9 and C; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 168–85; and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 92–6.

⁸⁶ Arnobius is rather vague about what magistracy this man held: in the next chapter (c. 74), he is described as ‘the violent prefect’ (*praefectus saeviens*), though which prefecture he held is not specified; then in c. 76 he is named as Fabian and described specifically as the urban prefect (*urbis praefectus*), presumably the urban prefect who was appointed to replace Agrestius Chromatius when he took sick leave. But it is not clear why the urban prefect—who had judicial authority over all Rome, and an area of 100 miles around Rome—should have been specifically responsible for *Regio XIV (Transtiberim)*, the region in which the Naumachia was located; the fourteen individual *regiones*, from the time of Severus Alexander, were each governed by a magistrate of senatorial rank called a *curator*. So perhaps the *patronus* here is to be understood as the *curator* of *Regio XIV*; but from the point of view of the narrative, it is equally possible, although Arnobius does not specifically say so, that the *patronus* of the *regio* was understood to have handed Zoe over to the urban prefect Fabian, who then tried and executed her.

⁸⁷ The Naumachia in question is presumably the ‘Naumachia Vaticana’ or ‘Naumachia Traiani’, a large building recovered by excavation lying just north-west of the Castel Sant’Angelo, which was evidently intended for water spectacles. The work was built by Trajan, but was abandoned by the sixth century. From it came the name *regio naumachiae*, a term which was in use as early as the sixth century to describe a very large area stretching from the Vatican Hill to the Castel Sant’Angelo and south to the Via Cornelia. See Platner–Ashby, p. 358; Richardson,

a few drops of incense on the little statue of Mars. Then she replies: 'You are compelling a woman to sacrifice to Mars, so that you might demonstrate that your Mars is a delight to women; but that (wretch) was able even to take away the modesty from Venus, the most shameless (of goddesses); but he will not be able to prevail over me, since I carry the sign of my faith on my forehead. I do not struggle against him with my own forces, but, trusting in the strength of my Lord Jesus Christ, with a smile I scorn both you and him.' Then the protector of the region put her in an extremely dark prison, and for five days arranged that she could neither see daylight nor receive food or drink. Only the voice of him who had locked her up in there was heard, saying, 'You will die there of hunger, and thirst, and blindness, unless you undertake to propitiate the gods.'

74. But when six days had passed, they reported concerning her to the violent prefect (*praefectus*), who ordered her to be strung up by her neck and hair from a high tree, with the stench⁸⁸ from a dung-heap placed beneath her. As soon as she was strung up, she gave up the ghost while confessing the Lord. Removing her body, the officials tied it to a stone and immersed it in the bed of the Tiber, forbidding Christians to take her body and make of it a goddess for themselves.

75. When her martyrdom had been celebrated, she came in a dream to St Sebastian, and related to him how she had undergone martyrdom for the Lord. When St Sebastian reported this, St Tranquillinus burst out saying, 'Women go before us to the crown (of martyrdom): why do we go on living?' Going out on the eighth day [6 July] after the feast of the Apostles, he went to the *confessio* of St Paul.⁸⁹ He was similarly arrested in ambush, and was stoned to death by the people, and his body was committed to the waters of the Tiber.

76. Likewise Nicostratus and Claudius, together with Castorius and Victorinus and Symphorianus, while they were looking for the bodies of the saints along the banks of the Tiber, were arrested by persecutors, and taken to the urban prefect (*urbis praefectus*). He was the judge (*iudex*) Fabian,⁹⁰ who

p. 266; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, p. 362; and C. Buzzetti, 'Naumachia Traiani', *LTUR* III, pp. 338–9.

⁸⁸ Bolland's text here reads *subter fumum ex sterquilinio*; one wonders whether *fumum* is a corruption of *finum* ('excrement'), such that Zoe was suspended over the excrement from a sewer.

⁸⁹ The *confessio* of St Paul in the great basilica of St Paul on the Via Ostiense (S. Paolo fuori le mura), built in the 380s, and supposedly visited by Tranquillinus, was a grating-enclosed tomb located beneath the high altar; the memorial site itself marked with a slab with the dedicatory inscription PAVLO APOSTOLO MART(YRI). See Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St Peter and St Paul*, pp. 165–94, with figs. 45 and 52–5; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 192–7; and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 125–30.

⁹⁰ No urban prefect named Fabianus is attested between the years 284–338 (years for which our records are nearly complete): see Barnes, *New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, pp. 110–11, and *PLRE* I, pp. 1053–4.

urged them to sacrifice, and, hounding them with threats and blandishments, for ten days was unable to move them in any way. Then he reported concerning them to the emperors, who ordered them to be tortured to the third degree.⁹¹ And when, assailed by tortures, they would in no wise give in, he ordered them to be thrown headlong into the depths of the sea. Accordingly they were bound up with heavy weights, and consigned to the waves of the sea, and in this pure place amidst the waves they celebrated the crown of martyrdom. Thus did the pagans lay traps for the faithful, and, aggravated by a wicked rage, they could not even bear to hear the name 'Christian'.

77. Meanwhile a certain man had attached himself to Pope Gaius by means of feigned belief, saying that he was a Christian; he was an apostate, and was fraudulent in everything he said, and crafty in everything he did. Why say more? When he was challenged by Tiburtius, a most scholarly and noble and holy man, that he had put false hair on the crown of his head with the skill of a barber,⁹² and that he was being well fed and was feasting by means of deception, and that he was presenting himself in women's company licentiously, and that he was keeping himself away from fasting and prayer, that, being much given to sleep, he was not present with those spending their nights in (singing) hymns to God: when for all these reasons, as we said, he was sharply challenged by the blessed Tiburtius, he pretended that he accepted the warning calmly: and by treachery he arranged it that some infidels seized St Tiburtius while he was praying. He had him held in this detention, and brought at the same time to the private audience (*ad secretarium*) of the cruel judge (*iudex*). And when they were brought in, Fabian the prefect said to the man who had treacherously betrayed him [Tiburtius]: 'What are you called?' And he replied: 'Torquatus'. Fabian said: 'What do you profess?' Torquatus said: 'I am a Christian'. Fabian said: 'Are you unaware of what the unconquerable emperors have decreed, that whoever refuses to sacrifice to the gods will be lacerated by various tortures?' Torquatus said: 'This man [Tiburtius] is my teacher, and he himself always taught me: that whatever I see him do, it is necessary that I do myself.'

78. Fabian, turning to St Tiburtius, said: 'Did you hear what Torquatus alleges? What do you say to these (charges)?' St Tiburtius said: 'For a long time Torquatus has been lying that he is a Christian. For the authority behind that holy name takes it grievously amiss that His name is used by those who are not

⁹¹ The words *usque tertio* mean literally 'up to the third time', translated here as 'to the third degree'. The phrase does not occur elsewhere in *passiones* of martyrs, and its exact meaning is uncertain.

⁹² The man (Torquatus) was evidently attempting to simulate some form of Christian tonsure. But what would that have been in the fifth century (or the early fourth)? See *DACL* XV/2, cols. 2430–43 [H. Leclercq], esp. 2435, where various fifth-century western sources are cited in which luxurious and abundant hair is prohibited, and short hair is recommended, but no particular tonsure, such as the characteristic monastic crown of later centuries, is stipulated.

His followers. In truth, most illustrious lord, this Christian word has divine power—the power, that is, of those who are adherents of Christ, who live in a holy manner (*philosophati*), who are truly called Christians, who have fought valiantly to crush wantonness. Do you think, most illustrious lord, that this man is a Christian, who uses the fringe on his head to further his work as a pimp, who frequents the barber, who hunches his shoulders seductively, who extends his slinking pace with vile effort, who treats men carelessly, who watches women attentively? Christ never deigned to have such followers. But since he stated that he is to imitate me, you will (be able to) prove him a liar through your own observation. He will now reveal clearly what he has always been like.’

79. Fabian said: ‘You will behave wisely if you consider your own well-being and do not scorn the decrees of the emperors.’ St Tiburtius said: ‘I consider my own well-being best when, in scorning the gods and goddesses, I confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is my God.’ Torquatus said: ‘Not only is this Christian cruel, but he also convinces others, and deceives them, and teaches that “all the gods are demons”;⁹³ for he, together with his associates, with whom he practises magic, is engaged in incantations by day and night.’ St Tiburtius said: ‘This false witness will not go unpunished.’ And he said to the judge [Fabian]: ‘This man whom you see, most illustrious lord, boiling over with his concern for wickedness, is associated with Christians for no other purpose than that he thinks how he might reveal himself to us as a Christian, (and) how he might pretend to others that he is most faithful. I reprove in him his Cyclopean gluttony, his wine-soaked modesty, the holiness of the divine name buried (within him). While drunk he suffered thirst, and was vomiting up his hunger: at feasts he ate, drank, and vomited not like a Christian but like an Antoninian of old;⁹⁴ and now he denounces Christians, accuses Christians, incites a gentle judge against us, hands the sword to an unwilling judge, and urges that we bow our necks to demons. Let us see your intention, let us see your bloodthirsty decision: and let us observe the poison of your heart in this wicked display of words. Gird yourself up, cruel man: adopt the role of executioner, appropriate for yourself the sentence of the judge himself: bring on the rack, hang Christians, condemn, strike, burn (them), use every kind of torture: you have treated us well. If you threaten exile, this is a whole (new) world for those who reflect on this; if torture, we escape from the prison of the world; if fires, we conquer greater than these in (conquering) our desires.

⁹³ Ps. 95: 5.

⁹⁴ Reading *Antoninianus* for Bolland’s *Antonianus*; the reference is presumably to Antoninus Elagabalus, whose gluttonous debauchery is described in detail in *SHA*, ‘Antoninus Elagabalus’, cc. 11, 19–22. For the adjectival form *Antoninianus*, see *SHA*, ‘Diadumenus Antoninus’, c. 7, and *TLL* II, col. 189, lines 41–63.

Decide whatever is appropriate: to us, all punishment is trivial, where conscience is a blameless companion.'

80. Fabian the prefect said: 'Restore yourself to your kindred, and be what nature decreed you to be. For, (although) nobly born, you have descended to such great filth, that you wish to undergo torture and infamy and death.' St Tiburtius said: 'O wisest of men, O judge (fittingly) appointed for the Romans! Because I do not wish to worship Venus the whore, and incestuous Jupiter, and deceitful Mercury, and Saturn the murderer of his children, I incur the infamy of my noble birth; and because I worship and venerate the one and only God Who reigns in the heavens, you threaten that I am to be afflicted with torture. We do not assent to your argument; we do not deny that Christ the Son of God came down from heaven to earth in order that man could ascend from earth to heaven. Trampling underfoot all these worthless effigies, which you worship without reason, I have subjected myself to Almighty God.'

81. Then Fabian ordered that burning coals be spread out at his feet; and he said to him: 'Choose one of two things: either cast incense on these coals, or else walk on them barefoot.' Then the blessed Tiburtius, making the sign of the Cross, walked steadily over them on bare feet, and began to say to the prefect: 'Abandon your faithlessness, and learn that He is the only God, Whom we confess to be Lord over all creatures. You put your hands, if you can, into boiling water in the name of Jupiter your god; and, if he can, your Jupiter will cause you not to feel the heat of the water. For it seems to me that I am walking on rose petals in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, because creation obeys the command of its Creator.'

82. Fabian said: 'Who could be unaware that your Christ has taught you magic?' St Tiburtius said: 'Be silent, wretch, and do not do injury to my ears such that I hear you barking with a rabid voice, (when) you pronounce His holy and honeyed name.' Then in a rage Fabian pronounced the sentence, saying: 'Let this blasphemer of the gods, (who is) guilty of atrocious crimes, be executed by sword.' He was taken out on the Via Labicana, at the third mile from the City and, pouring out a prayer to the Lord, departed (this life) by being struck with one blow of the sword.⁹⁵ And, when a Christian showed up

⁹⁵ The burial of Tiburtius, in an above-ground mausoleum in the cemetery (catacombs) *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana, is recorded in the seventh-century itineraries (Appendix IV (a) [§6] and (b) [§8]). On the site of the burial of Tiburtius within the cemetery itself, identified by a tiny fragment in Filocalian lettering thought to preserve the letters UR of Tiburtius' name, see Guyon, 'L'oeuvre de Damase', pp. 238–44; *idem*, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*, pp. 407–9; and *idem*, 'Duas lauros (inter), coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 209–15. On the burial of Tiburtius in particular, see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 116–18; and on Damasus' epigram for this Tiburtius, see Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 164–5 [no. 31]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 135–6; and Appendix II (I), p. 644. This same Tiburtius figures in the *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, where he appears in a dream-vision to two Roman matrons, and instructs them to bury the two saints near to him in the catacomb at the third mile of the Via Labicana (XXV.12). And note that this St Tiburtius buried on the Via Labicana is to be

in the same place, he was buried there; and up to the present day Christ offers many benefits there in praise of His name.

83. After this Torquatus brought it about that Castulus, the house-steward of the imperial palace (*zetarius palatii*), who was a friend of Christians, was arrested; when he had been imprisoned, and brought up three times, and questioned three times, (always) persevering in his confession of the Lord, he was put in a sand-pit and buried in a heap of sand, and with his palm of martyrdom he travelled to the Lord.

84. After this Marcellianus and Marcus are arrested; and they were both tied to a post and had sharp nails driven into their feet. The insane Fabian said to them: 'You shall stand with your feet nailed down, until you render due service to the gods.' Then both brothers, nailed to the one post, were chanting, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity'.⁹⁶ Fabian says to them: 'Miserable wretches, abandon your insanity, and free yourselves from the impending tortures.' They both said in reply: 'We have never been entertained so well: we begin now to be fixed in the love of Christ. Would that you were to permit us to be this way when we were clothed in the covering of this body!' And when a day and a night had passed, and they had persevered in chanting psalms and hymns, he ordered them both to be transfixed with spears on the place where they were standing; and thus they passed to the starry realms through the glory of martyrdom. They themselves were buried on the Via Appia, at the second mile from the City, in the place which is called *Ad arenas*, because there were catacombs in the tufa there, from which the walls of the city were constructed.⁹⁷

85. When these events had taken place, St Sebastian was accosted by men lying in ambush: and because, as I said, he seemed to be hidden beneath his

distinguished from St Tiburtius, the brother-in-law of St Caecilia (see IV. 8–12, 16–18, 22, 24), buried with SS. Valerian and Maximus in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia (Amore, *ibid.* pp. 179–81).

⁹⁶ Ps. 132: 1.

⁹⁷ On the name *Ad arenas*, see L. Spera, 'Arenas, ad', *LTUR. Suburbium I*, p. 156. In fact the cemetery in which SS. Marcus and Marcellianus were buried is located off the Via Appia, closer to the Via Ardeatina, as we learn from the seventh-century itineraries (see below, Appendix IV (a) [§9] and (b) [§5]); it is now known as the 'cemetery of Basileus'. This cemetery housed hypogean basilicas of Pope Damasus and his family, and also of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus; the latter has been identified by means of a plaster fragment containing a graffito with their names (*ICUR IV*, no. 11745: 'SCS MARCVS ET MARCE[LLIANVS]'). On the cemetery of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus (or of Basileus), see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 232–7; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 125–8; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 198–200; as well as the more detailed studies by P. Saint-Roch: 'La région centrale du cimetière connu sous le nom de "Cimetière des saints Marc et Marcellien et Damase"', *RACr* 57 (1981), 209–51; *idem*, 'Un cubicule important dans le cimetière de Damase et des Saints Marc et Marcellien', in *L'inhumation privilégiée du IVe au VIIIe siècle en Occident*, ed. Y. Duval and J.-C. Picard (Paris, 1986), pp. 189–91 with fig. 1; and esp. Saint-Roch, *Le cimetière de Basileus*, pp. 37–43 (the tombs of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus in the crypt designated Ar) with fig. 11 (the graffito), as well as (more briefly), *idem*, 'S. Basilei coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium I*, pp. 207–11.

(military) cloak even though he was a worthy soldier of Christ, the prefect reported to the emperor Diocletian concerning him. Summoning Sebastian to him, Diocletian said: 'I have always esteemed you among the principal officers of the palace. And yet you have lain hidden as an insult to the gods, to the detriment of my well-being!' St Sebastian said: 'For your well-being I always worshipped Christ; and I always adored Him Who is in heaven, for (the benefit) of the Roman state, regarding it to be the doing of an insane and empty mind to seek assistance from stone statues.' Enraged, Diocletian ordered him to be led into the middle of the field,⁹⁸ and to be tied up as though a target for bow-and-arrow practice; and he commanded that the bowmen fix him all over (with their arrows). Then the soldiers placed him in the middle of the field, and filled him completely with their arrows, so that he bristled with arrow-shots almost like a hedgehog.

86. Thinking he was dead, they departed. Then a survivor (from the household) of Castulus the house-steward, named Irene, went at night so she could take away his body and bury it. And finding him still alive, she took him to her house at the top of a steep stairway where she was living in the palace; and within a few days there he regained his full health in all his limbs.

87. And when all the Christians gathered to meet him, they urged him to leave. But he, after making a prayer, descended, and standing on the 'Steps of Elagabalus' (*gradus Heliogabali*),⁹⁹ said to the emperors as they approached him:¹⁰⁰ 'The priests of the temples assail the spirits of your empire with wicked deceptions, reporting false fabrications concerning Christians, saying that they are the enemies of the state; yet through their prayers the state itself improves and grows; they never cease from praying for your empire and the well-being of the Roman army.' When he had said such things as these, Diocletian said:

⁹⁸ The 'field' in question, being used here for military exercises, is presumably the famous Campus Martius, a large area of Rome bounded on the west by the Tiber and on the east by the Via Lata (the present-day Corso), stretching from the Piazza Venezia in the south to the Via Tomacelli in the north. For much of the later empire it remained an open, grassy field; but inevitably buildings began to encroach from the late fourth century onwards (Honorius was obliged to legislate against the construction of *casae seu tuguria*), and the Campus Martius became the most densely populated area of medieval Rome. At the time when the present *passio* was composed, in the first half of the fifth century, some open areas could still apparently be used for military exercises. On the Campus Martius, see Platner-Ashby, pp. 91-4; Richardson, pp. 65-7; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 174-228; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 275-96; and T. P. Wiseman, 'Campus Martius', *LTUR* I, pp. 220-4.

⁹⁹ The present passage is the unique reference in ancient sources to the *gradus Heliogabali*: see Platner-Ashby, p. 248; Richardson, p. 182 (who suggests that the steps were on the east side of the Palatine, near the south corner, leading down in the direction of the Circus Maximus); and esp. F. Coarelli, 'Gradus Heliogabali', *LTUR* II, p. 372, and *idem*, 'Heliogabalus, templum; Heliogabalium', *ibid.* III, pp. 10-11, who suggests that the stairway gave access to the temple of Heliogabalus, which was located in turn in the area of the Vigna Barberini.

¹⁰⁰ The only occasion on which the two Augusti Diocletian and Maximian were together in Rome was for the *vicennalia* of Diocletian in November or December, 303: see Barnes, *The New Empire*, p. 59, and above, nn. 23 and 71.

'Are you not Sebastian, whom I had ordered recently to be killed with arrow-shots?' St Sebastian said: 'My Lord Jesus Christ deigned to restore me for this purpose, that I might meet and challenge you in the presence of the entire populace, to the effect that your persecution is raging against the servants of Christ as a result of an unjust decision.'

88. Then (Diocletian) ordered him to be taken to the hippodrome of the Palace,¹⁰¹ and to be beaten at length until he breathed out his last. Then they took his body at night, and dumped it in the Cloaca Maxima,¹⁰² so that the Christians would not make a martyr of him. Then St Sebastian appeared in a dream to St Lucina, a certain devout matron,¹⁰³ saying: 'You will find my body in that sewer which is next to the Circus (Maximus), hanging on a nail. When you lift it up from there, you should take it *ad catacumbas*,¹⁰⁴ and bury it at the entrance to the crypt adjacent to the traces (*vestigia*) of the apostles.'¹⁰⁵

89. Then at midnight Lucina went herself with her servants, and raising up the body placed it in her wheelbarrow, and took it to the place which he had designated, and buried it with all care. For thirty days St Lucina herself did not depart from that holy place.

¹⁰¹ The palace in question here is the Domus August(i)ana, or the imperial residence on the Palatine: see Platner-Ashby, pp. 158–66; Richardson, pp. 117–18; and L. Sasso d'Elia, 'Domus Augustana, Augustiana', *LTUR* II, pp. 40–5. The 'hippodrome of the Palace' was known already in the time of Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* v. 6, 19, 40) as 'a garden in the shape of a (circus or) stadium'; edgings of the paths, in white marble, are still to be seen on the side of the Palatine nearest the Colosseum in the Vigna Barberini. In other words, the *hippodromus* was not a stadium intended for chariot-racing, but a garden in the shape of a stadium. The present passage of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* is the principal source for the name 'hippodromus Palatii': see Delehaye, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', pp. 226–8; Platner-Ashby, p. 162; Sasso d'Elia, 'Domus Augustana, Augustiana' p. 44 and *idem* 'Domus Augustana (Vigna Barberini)', p. 45.

¹⁰² The Cloaca Maxima is one of the great feats of Roman engineering; it flows underground from the Subura and debouches in the Tiber near the Forum Boarium. On the Cloaca Maxima, see Platner-Ashby, pp. 126–7; Richardson, pp. 91–2; E. Gowers, 'The Anatomy of Rome from Capitol to Cloaca', *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995), 23–32, on the splendid symbolism of the Cloaca Maxima as the 'excretory duct' of the city of Rome; and H. Bauer, 'Cloaca Maxima', *LTUR* I, pp. 288–90. Bodies of criminals executed in the Flavian amphitheatre were either dumped in the Cloaca Maxima or dragged by hooks to the river Tiber (see Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, pp. 220–4, with map 2 (p. 215)). Lucina is pictured as retrieving Sebastian's body near the exit at the Tiber.

¹⁰³ A devout matron named Lucina recovers and buries the bodies of executed martyrs in several Roman *passiones*, probably owing to the influence of the *Passio S. Sebastiani*: those of Pope Cornelius (VII.3), Processus and Martinianus (XIX.8), Pope Marcellus (XX.21–2), and Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI.2); see Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', and Cooper, 'The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop', pp. 311–16.

¹⁰⁴ The catacomb known as *ad catacumbas* was located at the third mile of the Via Appia, a short distance to the south of those of Praetextatus and Callistus, and opposite the Circus of Maxentius; see above, n. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Mention of the 'traces' (*vestigia*) of the apostles is an allusion to the *Memoria apostolorum* (see above, n. 7), which did indeed lie adjacent to the crypt of St Sebastian; see also G. Belvederi, 'Le cripte di Lucina', *RACr* 21 (1944–5), 121–46.

90. After a number of years peace was restored to the Church.¹⁰⁶ Immediately as the Church received the blessing of peace, she (Lucina) rebuilt her house as a church.¹⁰⁷ Leaving all her wealth to the resting-places of saints, she made that same church over to the patrimony of Christ, who lives as equal with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, and reigns in the unity of divine power forever and ever.

¹⁰⁶ The peace of the Church began in Italy and Africa with the cessation of the 'Great Persecution' under Maxentius in 306, and especially with the restoration of confiscated church property after the election of Pope Miltiades in 311; see Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 111–13.

¹⁰⁷ The church in question is one of the Roman *titulus*-churches; it was represented by two priests at the Roman synod of 499: see *MGH*, *AA* XII, pp. 399–415, at 414, with discussion by Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 80–4; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 235–8; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 125 (no. 28). The church has subsequently been known as S. Lorenzo in Lucina, on the Campus Martius, just off the Via Lata (now known as the Corso): see Huelsen, *ibid.* p. 288; Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 161–82; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 166–7; G. De Spirito, 'Lucina, titulus', *LTUR* III, pp. 192–3; O. Brandt (ed.), *S. Lorenzo in Lucina* (Stockholm, 2012); and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 119–20.

IV

St Caecilia and Companions

composed c.450 by Arnobius the Younger; relevant to the crypt of St Caecilia in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia); the *titulus*-church of St Caecilia (Trastevere); the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia)

By the sixth century at latest, St Caecilia had become one of the most famous of all Roman martyrs: she was commemorated in the Canon of the Mass (Appendix V(a), p. 667), and her feast day is recorded against 22 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 657) and commemorated in all the early sacramentaries ('Veronense', Gelasian, and Gregorian: Appendix V (b), (c), and (d), pp. 669, 670, 672). This widespread fame derives entirely from the popularity of the present *Passio S. Caeciliae*,¹ a work which was composed c.450 by Arnobius the Younger (see below), which circulated in hundreds of manuscripts, and which exerted palpable influence on many later Roman *passiones* (not least the *passio* of Pope Urban, no. XXX),² as well as on works of the later fifth and earlier sixth centuries such as Victor of Vita's *Historia persecutionis Africanae prouinciae* [CPL 798],³ the *Regula magistri* [CPL 1858],⁴ and the *Liber pontificalis*.⁵ Yet in spite of the popularity of the *passio*, virtually nothing is known of the saint whose martyrdom it

¹ Listed *BHL* 1495 and *CPL* 2171; for studies on the text, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 116–20 and 293–6; *DACL* II/2 [1916], cols. 2712–38 [H. Quentin]; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 73–96; *BSS* III, cols. 1064–86 [E. Josi and M. C. Celletti]; Connolly 'The Legend of St Cecilia', pp. 3–37; Parmegiani and Pronti, *S. Cecilia in Trastevere*, pp. 11–21 ('Cecilia nella *passio* e nella storia'); Caponi, 'Ultimi studi', pp. 13–36; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 80–8; and esp. *eadem*, 'Nouvelles recherches'.

² The preface of the work (cc. 1–2) was particularly influential, and was recycled whole or in part in a very substantial number of later saints' lives; see Tomea, 'Il prologo della *Passio Caeciliae*'.

³ On the debt of Victor of Vita's *Historia* (composed between 486 and 523) to the *passio* of St Caecilia, see n. 33.

⁴ On the debt of the *Regula magistri* (early sixth century) to the *passio* of St Caecilia, see n. 49.

⁵ The life of Pope Urban in the *Liber pontificalis* (first recension completed c.530) reveals its indebtedness to the *passio* of St Caecilia in its statement that 'by the teaching he [Urban] passed on, he converted many to baptism and the faith, including the most noble Valerian, husband of St Caecilia' (trans. Davis, p. 7).

describes. She is not recorded as a martyr in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354; the location of her burial in one of the suburban catacombs is not certainly known; and Pope Damasus did not compose an epigram to commemorate her. The earliest liturgical text in which she is commemorated is the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, but, as we have seen, the relevant entry derives almost certainly from the present *passio*. Everything suggests that St Caecilia is a fiction created by her hagiographer.⁶

The fictional life and martyrdom of St Caecilia as described by Arnobius is as follows. After two introductory chapters, in which the obligation incumbent on Christians to record the accomplishments of martyrs is explained (cc. 1–2), St Caecilia is introduced as a devout virgin who was betrothed and then married to a young man named Valerian (c. 3). (Note that, unlike the majority of *passiones* of Roman martyrs, no statement is made at the outset concerning the emperor(s) under whom the events described take place.) When Valerian came to her bridal chamber on the night of the wedding, Caecilia explained to him that her virginity was protected by a guardian angel (c. 4). When Valerian asked to see the angel, Caecilia explained that he needed first to be purified by baptism, and in order to accomplish that he needed to visit a saintly old man named Urban (later revealed as Pope Urban) who was living near the third mile of the Via Appia (c. 5). Valerian duly found Urban and was baptized (cc. 6–7). On returning to the house, he found Caecilia at prayer, but was now able to see the angel, who was holding two crowns (one for each of them); Valerian and Caecilia then agreed on a plan of mutual chastity under the guise of their marriage, and Valerian expressed the wish that his brother Tiburtius also be converted to belief in Christ (c. 8). Tiburtius came to their house, and first Valerian, and then Caecilia, expatiated at length on the iniquities of idol-worship and the delights of the eternal life (cc. 9–10). Tiburtius was convinced by these arguments and asked to be baptized; but when he heard that he was to be taken to Pope Urban, he pointed out that Urban was in hiding because he had been condemned to death; but Caecilia pointed out that death is nothing to be feared and that the delights of this present life are merely illusory (c. 11). Caecilia then launched into a long explanation of Christian doctrine, at the end of which Tiburtius went to Pope Urban and was baptized (cc. 12–16). Meanwhile, the urban prefect, one Turcius Almachius, was executing Christians, and Tiburtius and Valerian were burying their bodies, a practice which was reported to the prefect; they were duly brought before the prefect, who engaged in debate about Christian belief first with Tiburtius (c. 17) and then with Valerian (cc. 18–21). The prefect ordered that they

⁶ Cf. Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 88, describes the author as ‘un hagiographe, qui n’est qu’un romancier.’ Connolly (‘The Legend of St Cecilia’, pp. 19–22 and 30–1) suggested, rather improbably, that the cult of St Caecilia in Trastevere was founded on the local folk cult of the so-called ‘Bona Dea’, but the argument is extremely doubtful.

were to be taken out of town to a temple of Jupiter, and, if they would not sacrifice, they were to be executed; they were conducted to the place by Maximus, a senior officer of the judiciary (*cornicularius*), and during the trip Maximus and Tiburtius entered into discussion about the desirability of Christian belief (c. 22). Maximus wished to hear more, and so took the prisoners to his own home, where Caecilia came at night with priests, with the result that Maximus and his household were all baptized (c. 23). When they were taken back to the temple of Jupiter and refused to sacrifice, Valerian and Tiburtius were executed; during the execution Maximus saw angels of God receiving their souls; his Christian conversion was reported to Almachius, whence Maximus was beaten to death, and Caecilia buried him next to Valerian and Tiburtius (c. 24). Almachius then sent his agents to look into the value of Caecilia's estate, but found that she had given everything away to the poor; Caecilia addressed the agents and converted them to Christianity (cc. 25–6), and they were all baptized by Pope Urban (c. 27). Almachius then ordered Caecilia to be brought before him, and they entered into a lengthy debate, during which Caecilia impudently scorned the prefect's authority and pagan beliefs (cc. 28–30). Eventually he ordered her to be taken back to her home and murdered (c. 31); Pope Urban buried her body among those of the bishops of Rome (c. 32).

The pretext for the composition of the *passio* appears to be the fact that there was a *titulus*-church in Trastevere—the *titulus Caeciliae*, corresponding to the present-day church of S. Cecilia—which preserved the name of its founder, who, judging solely by the name, may have been a Roman matron belonging to the wealthy family of *Caecilii* (this, however, is mere conjecture).⁷ The church of St Caecilia was in existence by the early fifth century.⁸ Beneath the present church, which dates largely from the early ninth century, excavation uncovered a second-century apartment block (*insula*) and a room which contained a late antique bath (*balneum*), the remains of which can still be viewed beneath the present church. (The bath figures in c. 31 of the present *passio*, and was evidently known as such to the hagiographer.) The late antique church itself was a rectangular hall (*basilica*) with an adjoining baptistery; but this early church was replaced by Pope Paschal I (817–24) with a new building which preserved something of the shape and orientation of its late antique

⁷ A priest named Bonifatius is recorded in the acts of the Roman synod of 499 as being *presbyter tituli Caeciliae* (MGH, AA XII, p. 414 (no. 54); his colleague Marcianus is recorded in the same document as being *presbyter tituli sanctae Caeciliae* (*ibid.* p. 411 (no. 3)). This evidence implies that the Caecilia of the church in Trastevere was already known as a saint by the end of the fifth century. See discussion by Kirsch, *Die heilige Cäcilia*, pp. 41–57; *idem*, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 113–16; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 220–4; and Viellard, *Recherches sur les origines*, p. 101.

⁸ An inscription from the floor of the present church is dated 379 × 464: see ICUR I, p. 359, and Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, p. 113.

predecessor,⁹ and which, apart from a certain amount of Baroque embellishment, is essentially represented by the present-day church.¹⁰

The final chapter of the present *passio* (c. 32) reports that, after St Caecilia had been murdered in her own house (in the Trastevere), Pope Urban took away her body and buried it 'amongst his colleagues the bishops', where the reference is evidently to the so-called 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.¹¹ The seventh-century pilgrim itineraries mention a crypt of St Caecilia adjacent to that of St Sixtus (II)—that is, the 'Papal Crypt'—on the Via Appia (see Appendix IV (a) [§8] and (b) [§6]). Accordingly, when the great Giovanni Battista de Rossi first excavated the 'Papal Crypt', and found next to it another decorated crypt with a skylight, in which he found inscriptions with the letters *Caec...*, he naturally assumed that he had discovered the 'Crypt of St Caecilia'.¹² Given de Rossi's huge prestige, later scholars have naturally accepted his identification,¹³ and the crypt in question, with its frescoes and skylight, is known today as the 'Crypt of St Caecilia'.¹⁴ One of the inscriptions found by de Rossi preserves the name later read as *Caecilianus*,¹⁵ so the assumption arose that because of her wealth and prestige—and above all because of the statement in the present

⁹ Pope Paschal's reconstruction of S. Cecilia is described in the *Liber pontificalis*: ed. Duchesne, II, pp. 56–7; trans. Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 14–15, with n. 41. See discussion by Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I*, pp. 94–100 and 244–52.

¹⁰ See Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 229; Krautheimer, *CBCR I*, pp. 94–112; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 193–4; N. Parmegiani and A. Pronti, 'S. Caeciliae, Titulus', *LTUR I*, pp. 206–7; G. De Spirito, 'S. Caeciliae, titulus', *LTUR V*, pp. 232–3; Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 180–4; and esp. Parmegiani and Pronti, *S. Cecilia in Trastevere*, esp. pp. 27–34 ('Una domus di epoca repubblicana'), 35–60 ('Le strutture del I et del II secolo: i resti di un'insula'), 61–79 ('Le modificazioni del II e del IV secolo', with discussion of the *balneum* at 67–72, with figs. 60–5, as well as pp. 309–17: Appendix IV: 'Il Balneum'); note in particular the archaeologists' identification of the *prae-furnium* (the opening of the furnace used to heat water) adjacent to the *balneum*.

¹¹ On the famous 'Papal Crypt', see Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, pp. 15–37; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–200; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte I*, pp. 77–83; Testini, *Le catacombe*, pp. 128–35; *idem*, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 209–12 with figs. 58–60; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 49–67; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196–8; L. Spera, 'Cal(l)isti Coemeterium (Via Appia)', *LTUR. Suburbium II*, pp. 32–44, at 38; Fiocchi Nicolai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, pp. 16–17; and Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, 'Relire Styger', esp. pp. 133–52, with figs. 5–15, as well as the pioneering account by de Rossi, cited in the next footnote.

¹² de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, II, pp. 113–55.

¹³ See, for example, Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, pp. 25 and 43–7; Kirsch, *Die heilige Cäcilia*, p. 36; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 200; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 210–12 with fig. 58; and Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 103–13.

¹⁴ On the 'Crypt of St Caecilia', see (in addition to the pioneering account by de Rossi cited at n. 12) Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, pp. 45–67; Kirsch, *Die heilige Cäcilia*, pp. 15–36; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 200–2; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte I*, pp. 83–6 with colour pl. II; Parmegiani and Pronti, *S. Cecilia in Trastevere*, pp. 16–22; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 68–71; and esp. F. Bisconti, 'Il lucernario di S. Cecilia', esp. pp. 307–18, with figs. 1–9.

¹⁵ *ICUR IV*, no. 9707. There is helpful discussion of the names of the *gens Caecilii* in the crypt by Kirsch, *Die heilige Cäcilia*, pp. 36–40; for the inscriptions, see also Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 200–1.

passio (c. 32)—this Caecilia, though clearly not a martyr, was buried in a crypt sited prominently next to that of the popes. This hypothesis, and de Rossi's identification of the decorated crypt as belonging to St Caecilia, has been subject to severe doubts.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the fact remains that seventh-century guidebooks to the crypt described it as housing the remains of St Caecilia, and Pope Paschal I (817–24) removed from the crypt what he believed to be the remains of St Caecilia, and translated them to the church bearing her name in Trastevere.¹⁷ The author of the present *passio* was apparently following contemporary opinion in assigning St Caecilia's burial to the cemetery of Callistus, in a crypt adjacent to the 'Papal Crypt' (c. 32). But whether in fact this crypt had been created to house the remains of a woman named Caecilia, and whether such a woman was identical with the founder of the *titulus*-church in Trastevere, are simply unknown.

In short, the link between the Caecilia of the *titulus*-church and the saint commemorated in a crypt next to the 'Papal Crypt' is a pious fiction invented by Arnobius, the hagiographer of the present *passio*. Furthermore, in order to elaborate this fiction along the lines of earlier epic *passiones* such as those of Anastasia (II) and Sebastian (III), he associated with his saintly martyr Caecilia several more martyrs known from other sources: Valerian (Caecilia's bridegroom), Tiburtius (Valerian's brother), Maximus (a senior official of the judicial department of the prefecture) and Pope Urban, who baptized Valerian and Tiburtius (the mention of Pope Urban has the effect of dating Caecilia's martyrdom to the principate of Alexander Severus (222–35), but the hagiographer neglects to specify the name of the emperor under which she was executed).¹⁸ Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus are commemorated together against 14 April in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* as being buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia (see Appendix III, p. 652);¹⁹ and according to the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, there was a church dedicated to SS. Tiburtius, Valerian, and Maximus at the site of the cemetery of Praetextatus (see Appendix IV (a), (b), and (c), pp. 661, 663, 666).²⁰ The

¹⁶ Note, for example, the trenchant remarks by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 152–8.

¹⁷ *Liber pontificalis*, 'Paschal I', cc. 15–17, ed. Duchesne, II, pp. 55–6, trans. Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 15–18, with excellent commentary in the accompanying notes. In fact the *Liber pontificalis* states that Caecilia's remains were found in the cemetery of Praetextatus, not that of Callistus; but scholars regard the mention of 'Praetextatus' here as a mere slip of the pen for 'Callistus': see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 157.

¹⁸ Cf. Delehay, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 80: 'Les compagnons de S^{te} Cécile nous ramènent sur le terrain de l'histoire, pourvu qu'il soit entendu qu'ils doivent à l'hagiographe et à l'hagiographe seul d'être aux côtés de l'héroïne du récit.'

¹⁹ On the cemetery of Praetextatus, see the monumental study by Lucrezia Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*, and (briefly) *eadem*, 'Praetextati coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 250–61; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–84, as well as the earlier account by Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 282–99; cf. also no. I (p. 46, n. 7).

²⁰ See L. Spera, 'Tiburti, Valeriani et Maximi ecclesia, cymiterium', *LTUR. Suburbium V*, pp. 156–9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 179–81.

tomb of Pope Urban was located near by in the same cemetery.²¹ It would seem, therefore, that the hagiographer, in order to amplify his *passio* to the conventional epic proportions, incorporated into his narrative the names of martyrs who had no known connection with St Caecilia, but were familiar to him from the church and cemetery of Praetextatus.

The author of the *passio* of St Caecilia was a monk of the nearby monastery of S. Sebastiano, located less than a mile away on the same Via Appia, as Cécile Lanéry has recently shown: once again she has adduced powerful and incontrovertible arguments that the author of the *Passio S. Caeciliae* was Arnobius the Younger,²² a monk of S. Sebastiano during the mid-fifth century, whom she had previously identified as the author of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* (see p. 93). Her demonstration follows the procedure of her previous article, except that she is now able to add the *Passio S. Sebastiani* to the works of Arnobius with which she can compare the *Passio S. Caeciliae*: first, a striking number of verbal parallels and shared themes between the *passio* and the writings of Arnobius, especially the *Liber ad Gregoriam*, such as 'earthly existence', 'eternal punishment', 'divine reward', 'redemption', and so on; secondly, verbal similarities between the preaching of St Sebastian and that of St Caecilia; thirdly, the texts cited by the author of the *Passio S. Caeciliae* are exactly those cited by Arnobius and the author of the *Passio S. Sebastiani*; fourthly, the language of the *passio* of St Caecilia, particularly its author's preference for agentive nouns in *-or*, for adjectives in *-osus*, for compound verbs, and for grecisms, are precisely paralleled in the lexical preferences of Arnobius; and, finally, the types of *clausulae* sought by the author of the *passio* of St Caecilia, and their recorded frequencies, especially those of the most widely practised rhythms—*cursus velox* (pp4p), *cursus planus* (p3p), and *cursus tardus* (p4pp)—are matched almost precisely in Arnobius's *Liber ad Gregoriam* and *Passio S. Sebastiani*. The result of her demonstration is that the *passio* of St Caecilia can confidently be attributed to Arnobius the Younger, and can be dated somewhat later than the *passio* of St Sebastian, say, c.450.

Many of the themes treated in the *passio* of St Caecilia, especially in the (interminably) long speeches by the martyr-heroine, are those which are also found in the *passio* of St Sebastian: for example, the pervasive emphasis on Caecilia's chastity and Christian asceticism, which is very much in keeping with semi-Pelagian doctrine current during the Christological disputes of the pontificate of Leo (440–61), which taught that each Christian, by living a life of virtue, had the capacity to achieve his/her own salvation (as against the Augustinian position, where salvation can only be achieved through the intervention of divine grace). As in the case of the *passio* of St Sebastian, this doctrine would have been welcome to circles of Christian matrons in Rome,

²¹ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 183–4, and below, pp. 530–1.

²² Lanéry, 'Nouvelles recherches', pp. 533–59.

who pursued their own asceticism, and who may be envisaged as the intended audience for the *passio*.²³

Text. The *passio* of St Caecilia circulated widely in manuscript: *BHLms* lists 168 witnesses, the earliest dating from the late eighth century, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further sixty-two ('Hagiographie', pp. 84–5). The text translated here is that of Hippolyte Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 194–220 (based on two of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the work: Paris, BNF, lat. 10861 (s. ix [Canterbury, s. ix in.]) and Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, 144 (506) (s. x)).

1. We see human praise and the achievements of mortals either inscribed in bronze or written in gold with gleaming letters, commending them to the record of posterity; and as we survey these things, I wonder why we are not ashamed that we cloak in silence the victories of Christ's soldiers and do not conscientiously explain, and even commit to humble scraps of parchment, how they fought against their enemies and won, for the glory of the heavenly Ruler and for inspiring the minds of those still engaged in battle. Written accounts of such narratives bring many benefits. When they are read out, God is being praised: the memory of the saints is perpetuated, minds are edified, reverence is shown to the martyrs, despair arises among the infidels, envy among the unbelievers, anguish in those uninstructed in the faith, and happiness among all the saints rejoicing with Christ. The devil alone laments, who sees his battle being fought against heavenly weapons, since from this battle the one who will most likely emerge as victor is thought (to possess) the greatest strength. In fact the enemies formerly thought that they would win by killing the saints; but it was rather the saints who won by being killed: when accused they did not excuse (themselves); when interrogated they promptly confessed; when condemned to death²⁴ they gave thanks. And thus we read the celebrations of ancient victories of the Lord, when the Enemy said: 'In pursuit I shall capture them; I shall share the spoils; I shall fill my soul, I shall kill with my sword, my hand shall be triumphant'.²⁵ But God stretched out his right hand and the earth devoured him²⁶ and freed His people at the cost of His own blood.

2. In short the Enemy now lies beneath the feet of the saints and, emitting a moan, shouts out through lunatics and madmen and reveals the punishments of fire which he suffers, and recollecting that he is being consumed by the cruelty of the flames, he proves that all the saints, whom he persecuted for the name of Christ,²⁷

²³ See Consolino, 'Modelli di santità femminile', pp. 95–6, and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 86–7.

²⁴ Reading *damnati* for Delehaye's *damnat*. The entire sentence is indebted to Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, i. 12: 'si accusatur, non defendit; interrogatus vel ultro confitetur; damnatus gratias agit' (CCSL I, p. 87), a parallel pointed out by Caponi, 'Ultimi studi', p. 28.

²⁵ Cf. Exod. 15: 9; Ps. 17: 38.

²⁶ Cf. Exod. 15: 12.

²⁷ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*,

are now reigning—to such an extent that they are not dead since they give life to the dying, reveal joy to those in despair, offer medicine to those suffering illness, and, extracting the enemy of the human race from bodies possessed, they recall in him the tortures which they themselves suffered. And indeed, (although) they suffered momentary pain, they possess eternal glory; and they see him burning in never-ending flames, delivered over to perpetual disgrace. The devil shouts out that he is burning, that you may understand that he refreshed the saints with coolness; the diseased man shouts out that he is saved, that you may understand that the saints are united with the Saviour. For we read that our Lord the Saviour Himself said to His Father: ‘Father, I wish that wherever I am, they themselves may be with me.’²⁸ Through these things the mind is aroused to a remedy when it awaits evidence of its restoration. It offers the open attention of its spirit when it recognizes the proofs of its salvation through those who have truly been saved. The apostles maintained this faith, whose footsteps the army of martyrs followed, in order that they might carry their victories to the most victorious King. For up to the present day He Himself anticipates the minds of all those believing in Him with the font of His triumphal Cross.²⁹ The early apostles followed Him, the martyrs followed the apostles, the confessors the martyrs, the priests the confessors, the virgins the priests, the widows the virgins, chaste persons the widows:³⁰ the traces of Christ are evident in all of them. And therefore He shouts out daily: ‘Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’³¹

3. St Caecilia, a distinguished virgin, hearing these words, always carried the gospel of Christ hidden within her breast, and did not cease from divine conversation and prayer either by day or by night.³² She had a certain young man named Valerian as her betrothed; this young man, urging his mind on to love of the virgin, fixed a day for the wedding. Caecilia was dressed outwardly with garments woven with gold, but beneath them she wore a hair-shirt next to her skin. So greatly was the enthusiasm of her parents and spouse boiling up around her, that she could not reveal the inner love of her heart, and she did

p. 781; Robinson, ‘The Repression of Christians’, p. 285; De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 110–13; Benko, *Pagan Rome and the early Christians*, pp. 1–29; and Introduction, p. 12. Cf. Tertullian, *Apologeticum* i. 4: ‘Hanc igitur primam causam apud uos collocamus iniquitatis odii erga nomen Christianorum’ (CCSL I, p. 85).

²⁸ John 17: 24.

²⁹ Assuming the text is sound here; Arnobius uses a very odd mixed metaphor: the font of baptism and the triumph of the Cross are combined as the ‘font of the Cross’ (*triumphalis crucis suae sanctae lavacro*).

³⁰ Dufourcq (*Gesta*, I, p. 293), noted that the very same order of saints is found in (the Latin version of) the so-called ‘Apostolic Constitutions’ [CPG 1730], viii. 12 and 19.

³¹ Matt. 11: 28.

³² Adalbert de Vogüé has shown that this phrase (‘non diebus non noctibus a colloquiis diuinis et oratione cessabat’) was taken by the author of the *passio* from Rufinus’ Latin version [CPG 5620] of the *Historia monachorum* i. 1. 5 (Tyrannius Rufinus: *Historia Monachorum sive De vita sanctorum patrum*, ed. E. Schulz-Flügel (Berlin and New York, 1990), p. 248): see De Vogüé, ‘La prière perpétuelle’.

not wish to reveal by obvious signs that she loved Christ alone. Why say more? The day arrived on which the wedding was arranged, and as the organs were resounding she sang to the Lord Himself in the depths of her heart: 'Let my heart and my body be immaculate, so that I do not fall into confusion.' And, praying during fasts of two and three days' duration, she explained to the Lord what she feared. She invoked the angels with her prayers and petitioned the apostles with tears, and prayed to all those saints who serve Christ to help her with their prayers: she entrusted her chastity to the Lord.

4. But while these things were happening night came, during which she repaired together with her spouse Valerian to the secret silence of the bed-chamber,³³ and she speaks to him thus: 'O most sweet and beloved young man, what I shall confess to you is a secret, if you will swear to me to safeguard it with all due reverence.' Valerian, her spouse, swears that he will in no wise betray it, or reveal it under any condition. Then she said: 'I have as my lover an angel of God, who guards my body with excessive zeal; if he were to sense that you were touching me even lightly with polluted love, immediately he would unleash his fury against you, and you would lose the flower of your sweet youth. But if he should recognize that you love me with sincere and untainted love, and that you protect my virginity safe and unimpaired, he will love you as he loves me, and will reveal to you his kindness.'

5. Then Valerian, chastened by fear through God's will, said: 'If you wish that I truly believe what you say, show me this angel; and if I find that he truly is an angel of God, I shall do what you advise. But if you love another man, I will kill both you and him with my sword.' Then the blessed Caecilia said to him: 'If you promise to agree to my advice, and allow yourself to be purified in the perennial font (of baptism) and believe there is one true and living God in the heavens, you will be able to see him [the angel]'. Valerian says to her: 'And who shall it be who will purify me so that I can see the angel?' Caecilia replies to him: 'There is an old man who knows how to purify men so that they may be worthy to see the angel'. Valerian says to her: 'And where shall I look for this old man?' Caecilia replies to him: 'Go to the third milestone on the road which is called the Via Appia: there you will find poor men seeking aid from

³³ See discussion of this phrase by Lanéry ('Recherches d'hagiographie arnobienne' (p. 537)), who points out that Arnobius took it from the Latin translation of the *Historia monachorum* by Rufinus, xxx. 1. 3: 'cum intra nuptiales thalamos convenissent, et data eis essent cubiculi secreta silentia' (*Historia monachorum*, ed. Schulz-Flügel, pp. 375–6). The same phrase later recurs in the *Historia persecutionis Africanae prouinciae* i. 31 [CPL 798, composed after 486]: 'at ubi uentum est ut cubiculi adirentur secreta silentia' (MGH, AA III/1, p. 8; Moorhead, *Victor of Vita*, p. 15: 'When they came to approach the quiet privacy of their bedroom...'). Although earlier scholars argued that the author of the *passio* of St Caecilia derived the wording from Victor of Vita (e.g. Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 78–9), and hence that the work was not composed before 486, Lanéry (*ibid.*) persuasively showed that Arnobius derived the wording from the *Historia monachorum*, and that Victor of Vita very probably took it from Arnobius.

passers-by. I have always shown concern for these men, and they are perfectly aware of this secret of mine. When you see them, you will give them my blessing, saying: "Caecilia sent me to you that you might reveal to me the saintly old man Urban,"³⁴ since I have her secret message which I shall give to him." When you see him, indicate to him all my words. And when he has purified you, he will dress you in new and shining clothes; as soon as you enter this bedchamber, you will see the holy angel now become your friend, and you will obtain from him everything you ask for.'

6. Then Valerian set off and, following the instructions which he had been given, found St Urban, who, having twice been made to confess his Christianity, was hiding among the tombs of the dead.³⁵ When he [Valerian] reported all Caecilia's message to him, he rejoiced with great joy, and placing his knees on the ground, stretched out his hands to heaven and said with tears: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, sower of chaste counsel, receive the fruits of the seeds which You sowed in Caecilia. Lord Jesus Christ, good Shepherd: like a lamb Caecilia Your servant is revealing her devotion to You. For like the most gentle of lambs she sent to You her husband, whom she accepted as a ferocious lion. He would not have come here unless he believed. Therefore, O Lord, open the gateway of his heart to Your words, so that, recognizing You as his creator, he may renounce the devil and all his pomps and idols.'³⁶

7. As the holy bishop Urban was saying these and similar things in his prayer, suddenly there appeared before his face an elder, dressed in white garments, holding in his hands a book written in gold lettering. On seeing him Valerian is struck with terror and, falling to the ground, is rendered virtually dead. Then the elder raised him up, saying: 'Read the text in this book, and believe that you are worthy to be purified and to see the angel whose

³⁴ We learn subsequently (c. 11) that this Urban is none other than Pope Urban, whose pontificate was from 222 to 230: see *LP* (ed. Mommsen, pp. 22–3; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 143; trans. Davis, pp. 7–8). The entry in the *Liber pontificalis* mentions Urban's conversion of Valerian, and is therefore dependent on the present *passio* (see n. 5).

³⁵ It is not clear what Arnobius understands by stating that Urban had twice 'confessed' to being a Christian (*bis confessor factus*); for, had he confessed to being a Christian at a formal trial (*cognitio*), he would presumably have been sentenced to capital punishment and executed (cf. n. 42). However, from the third century onwards, the term *confessor* was used to describe someone who had been detained in prison and had been tortured, and subsequently released, but who had not undergone martyrdom: see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2508–15 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'confessor', and Barnes, *Tertullian*, p. 148. The present passage may simply mean that Urban had twice previously been arrested, (perhaps tortured), and released. Whatever the precise meaning of *bis confessor factus*, the fact of Urban's previous 'confession' explains why he was hiding in a catacomb at the time of Valerian's visit. The catacomb in question was located at the third mile of the Via Appia, but it is not entirely clear which catacomb is in question: that of Callistus, or that of Praetextatus (where, according to the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* and *LP*, he was subsequently buried); see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 183–4.

³⁶ Here again Arnobius adumbrates the wording of the baptismal service: 'Abrenuntias satanae? Et omnibus operibus eius? Et omnibus pompis eius? — Abrenuntio' (*DACL* II/1, col. 303); cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.61), p. 124.

appearance the devout virgin Caecilia promised to you.' Then Valerian, looking up, began to read on his own. This is what was written in the book: '(There is) one God, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all things, Who is above all things and is in all of us.'³⁷ And when he had read that to himself, the elder says to him: 'Do you believe it to be so, or do you still have doubts?' Then Valerian shouted out in a loud voice: 'There is nothing beneath the heavens which could more truly be believed.' When Valerian had said these things, that elder disappeared from their sight. Then St Urban baptized him and, teaching him all the rules of the faith, sent him back well instructed to Caecilia.

8. Arriving (back at the house) Valerian, dressed in white garments,³⁸ found Caecilia praying in the bedchamber, and standing next to her was the angel of God, having wings with brilliant feathers and gleaming with a fiery appearance,³⁹ bearing in his hands two crowns shining with roses and white as lilies; and he gave one to Caecilia and the other to Valerian, saying: 'Look after these crowns with an undefiled and pure heart, because I have brought them to you from Paradise; and this shall be your sign: they will never have the appearance of a drooping flower, never will the sweetness of their scent diminish, nor can they be seen by anyone else, except by those whose chastity will be found pleasing just as yours was proved to be pleasing. And because you, Valerian, have agreed to the plan of (mutual) chastity, Christ the Son of God sent me to you, that you may propose any request which you wish.' Hearing this he addressed him and said, 'There is nothing in this life sweeter to me than the affection of my only brother, and it is wicked to me that, after I have been liberated, I shall see my brother (remaining) in danger of perdition. I put this before all my requests and beg that you deign to free my brother Tiburtius as you have freed me, so that you make us both perfect in the confession of His name.' Hearing this the angel said to him with a joyous face: 'Because you have requested what delights Christ to perform even more than it does you, just as Christ gained you through His servant Caecilia, so through you He will gain your brother, and you will acquire the palm of martyrdom along with him [Tiburtius].'

³⁷ Eph. 4: 4–6.

³⁸ Following his baptism Valerian is dressed in white clothing (*in albis*); cf. c. 16, p.154, where Tiburtius is similarly dressed *in albis* for seven days following his baptism. After baptism, white clothing was put on in imitation of the risen Christ (Matt. 17: 2); see *DACL* I/2, cols. 3118–40 (s.v. 'Aubes baptismales'); J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient nach Ursprung und Entwicklung. Verwendung und Symbolik* (Freiburg, 1907), pp. 57–92; and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 247.

³⁹ Cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.59): 'a young man appeared before the eyes of Chromatius, whose face shone with flaming brightness' (p. 123), and discussion by Lanéry, 'Nouvelles recherches', p. 595.

9. When this discussion had come to an end, the vision of angelic authority departed for the heavens. And as they were feasting in Christ and were conversing for holy edification, Tiburtius the brother of Valerian arrived and, approaching as if towards a relative, kissed the head of St Caecilia and said: 'I wonder where the scent of roses and lilies comes from on this occasion? For if I were to hold these same roses and lilies in my hands, they could not exude odours of such sweetness. I confess to you that I am so refreshed that I think I have been suddenly renewed.' Valerian says to him: 'You were found worthy to smell the scent through my intercession; now, if you believe, you will also deserve to rejoice in the sight of roses, and to understand Whose blood flourishes in these roses, and Whose body becomes white as lilies. For we have crowns blooming with the colour of flowers and snow-white brightness which your eyes are unable to see.' Tiburtius says to him: 'Do I hear these things in a dream, or do you say them in reality, Valerian?' Valerian said: 'We have lived up till now in dreams, but now we are in a state of truth and there is no falsehood in us. For the gods which we worshipped in good faith are shown to be demons.' Tiburtius says to him: 'How do you know this?' Valerian replies: 'An angel of God taught me, whom you too could see, if you were purified from all the filth of idols.' Tiburtius says to him: 'And if it can come about that I see the angel of God, what delay is (involved) in my purification?' Valerian replied: 'None. Promise me only this, that you deny the idols and believe that there is one God in the heavens.' Tiburtius said: 'I do not understand your reason for pursuing this.'

10. Caecilia said: 'I am amazed that you do not understand that the images made of plaster, wood, bronze, and stone, or of any metal, cannot be gods—which spiders cover with cobwebs,⁴⁰ birds defecate on, on whose heads storks are in the habit of making nests for themselves—and which condemned prisoners make. For condemned persons are sent to the quarries for their crimes.⁴¹ Therefore, (given that they) take their beginning from condemned persons, how can they be deemed or thought to be gods? In the end there is no difference between a dead person and an idol. Just as a dead person still has all his limbs, he nevertheless cannot have breath or voice or feeling. By the same token all these useless deities have limbs, but all of them are known to be silly and transient and are proven to be worse than dead men; because the bodies of men, while they were living, saw with their eyes and listened with their ears, walked on their feet, spoke with their mouth, felt with their hands, and took in smells with their nostrils. These (idols) started from the dead and remain in

⁴⁰ Mark Humphries draws my attention to a very similar passage in a letter of Jerome, *Ep. cvii. 1*: 'Auratum squallet Capitolium, fuligine et araneorum telis omnia Romae templa cooperta sunt, movetur urbs sedibus suis et inundans populus ante delubra semiruta currit ad martyrum tumulos' (CSEL LV, p. 291).

⁴¹ The implication is that stone idols were carved in quarries (*metalla*) by prisoners condemned to the mines (*damnaticii ad metalla*).

death, because they are proven never to have lived nor to have been able to live.⁴² Then Tiburtius said: 'Whoever doesn't believe this, is a sheep.' As Tiburtius said this, St Caecilia kissed his head and said, 'I acknowledge today that you truly are my relative. For just as the love of God made your brother my husband, so your contempt for idols will make me your relative. Whence, because you are ready to believe, go with your brother so that you may deserve to undergo purification, through which you will be worthy to see the faces of angels and find forgiveness for all your sins.'

11. Then Tiburtius says to his brother: 'I beseech you, brother, that you tell me to whom you are going to take me.' Valerian replies: 'To a great man named Urban, in whom there is an angelic likeness, venerable (white) hair, true speech seasoned with wisdom.' Tiburtius says to him: 'You say he is Urban whom the Christians call their pope? I heard that he was condemned a second time and that, because he had been condemned, he sought a hiding-place in order to preserve himself.⁴³ If he should be found, he will without doubt be given over to frightful flames and, as they say, shall pay a hundred-fold; and we will likewise be burned, if we are found in his company; and while we seek divinity residing in the heavens, we encounter fury burning on earth.' Caecilia says to him: 'If there was only this one life, and there were no other, rightly would we fear to lose it. But since this (other) life, which can never end, is thoroughly better, why should we fear to lose this one, when through its loss we acquire possession of that (other life)?' Tiburtius replies: 'I never before heard this. Is there really another life besides this one?' Caecilia says to him: 'And is the life which is lived in this world really life?—(a life) which bodily humours swell up, pains diminish, burning heat dries out, unwholesome air sickens, foods inflate, hunger enervates, pastimes give relaxation, sadness devours, worries constrain, security dulls, riches overthrow, poverty casts down, youth exalts, old age bows down, illness shatters, grief consumes, and raging death advances on all of these, and thus puts an end to all carnal delight and, when it ceases to be, is thought not to have existed. For everything which does not exist is counted as nothing. But as for that (eternal) life, which follows this life: it is either given to the wicked with perpetual punishments, or is offered to the just with eternal joys.'

⁴² Cf. the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones*, in the translation of Rufinus [CPG 1015 (5)], v. 16. 1: 'ista enim simulacra nec in mortuorum numero habenda sunt, quia numquam vixerunt. Praeferenda sunt eis etiam sepulchra mortuorum, quoniam, licet nunc mortui sunt, habuerunt tamen aliquando vitam' (ed. B. Rehm, *Die Pseudoklementinen*, II. *Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung*, rev. F. Paschke (Berlin, 1965), p. 173).

⁴³ The implication seems to be that Urban had been tried once and released, perhaps for lack of evidence, perhaps because the informer (*delator*) who denounced him was afraid of giving evidence (see no. II (p. 77, n. 84)); when Urban was denounced as a Christian a second time to the authorities, he was summoned again for trial, and therefore went into hiding in the catacombs. The legal situation regarding his 'double' confession, however, is far from clear; see n. 35.

12. With her saying these things, Tiburtius said: ‘And who was there and (who), coming from there to here, could reveal this so that we can duly believe those people asserting this?’ Then the blessed Caecilia, getting to her feet, stood up and said with great firmness: ‘The Creator of heaven and earth, of the sea and of all birds, before He made all things gave birth to a Son and brought forth from His own power the Holy Spirit—the Son so that He could create all things, the Holy Spirit so that He might give life to everything. For the Son born of the Father made all things which exist; the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father,⁴⁴ animated all things.’ Tiburtius says to her: ‘Assuredly you say it is to be believed that there is one God in the heavens. How do you now affirm that there are three?’ Caecilia replied: ‘He is one God in His majesty, Whom we divide up into the Holy Trinity, just as we say that in one man there is genius, memory, and intelligence.⁴⁵ For through our genius we discover what we have not learned, we retain in our memory what we are taught, and we remark with our intelligence whatever we happen to see or hear. What, now? Does man not possess these three things? If a man is seen to have these things in the one name, how can Almighty God not have His majesty in the one deity of the Trinity?’ Then Tiburtius, prostrate on the ground, began to shout out, saying: ‘It does not seem to me that a human tongue is providing the explanation of this, but I think that the angel of God is speaking through your mouth.’ And when he had given thanks that she had clearly shown that there was one God in three persons, turning to his brother he said: ‘I confess that I am satisfied in respect of the one God; it remains for your discourse to proceed to my questioning as it had begun.’

13. Caecilia said: ‘Speak with me about these things, because the period of his apprenticeship prevents your brother from answering. But as to whatever matter you might wish to enquire, you will not find me unprepared, for the wisdom of Christ instructed me from the very cradle.’ Tiburtius says to her: ‘I ask these things: who was it who in coming here revealed the other life which you are proclaiming?’ Caecilia said: ‘The Father sent down His only-begotten Son, born of a Virgin, from heaven to earth; standing on the holy mountain He shouted out in a loud voice, saying: “Come to me, all peoples.”⁴⁶ And people of every sex, age, and station ran to Him. Then He said to all of them: “Do

⁴⁴ The credal formulation here (‘ex patre procedens spiritus sanctus’) was first promulgated by the Council of Constantinople (AD 381)—*πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον... τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον*—but was current among Latin authors of the first half of the fifth century, such as Paulinus of Nola (*Carm.* xix. 139: ‘spiritus ex patre procedens’). Significantly, the very same formulation was twice used by Arnobius the Younger in his doctrinal writings: *Conflictus cum Serapione* [CPL 239] i. 7: ‘ita et spiritus sanctus procedens ex patre’ (CCSL XXVA, p. 53), and *Praedestinatus* [CPL 243] i. 41: ‘spiritus sanctus procedens ex patre’ (CCSL XXVB, p. 27).

⁴⁵ A very similar triad is enunciated by Augustine, *De trinitate* x. 11. 18: ‘Haec igitur tria, memoria, intelligentia, voluntas, quoniam non sunt tres vitae sed una vita, nec tres mentes sed una mens, consequenter utique nec tres substantiae sed sunt una substantia’ (CCSL L, p. 330).

⁴⁶ Cf. Matt. 11: 28.

penance on behalf of your ignorance, because the kingdom of God approaches which will remove the kingdom of men.⁴⁷ God wishes believers to participate in His kingdom, in which whoever will have been more holy (on earth) will be more elevated there (in heaven).⁴⁸ There sinners are consumed by eternal tortures and perpetual fires; but the just shall receive the brilliance of perpetual glory and joys which cannot be terminated by any conclusion. Do not, O sons of men, seek the fleeting joys of this life, so that you may possess the eternal joys of that life which follows on this life. In this life one lives for a short time; in that life one lives forever.” Hearing these things the unbelieving people said with one voice: “Who has been there and who coming here from there can prove as true the things which you assert?” Then the Son of God said to them: “If I show to you dead persons who rose up from the dead, being unaware that they had died, will you not believe in the truth? Go, therefore, and bring as many dead persons as you can find, so that, in rising up from the dead, they may establish for you that all the things which I said are true.” Then the people brought countless bodies of dead persons, which He raised up as if they were sleeping, arousing them with His voice alone; and He shouted to them all, saying: “If you do not believe my words, believe at least the miracles.” And in the end, so that not even a trace of doubt should remain, He went with the people to the burial places, and called back in persons dead for three or four days and (now) stinking, the life which they had lost. He crossed seas, walking over the waves with dry feet; He commanded the winds; He drove away tempests and restrained storms and whirlwinds; He restored sight to blind persons, mobility to the lame, He gave speech to mutes and hearing to the deaf, He repaired paralytics with His word, He cleansed lepers, cured the infirm, restored lunatics, put demons to flight. But because the wicked were incensed because the people, abandoning them, were following His footsteps, throwing their garments at His feet and shouting, “Blessed (is He) Who comes in the name of the Lord”,⁴⁹ the Pharisees were inflamed against Him; they handed Him over to some governor (*praeses*) named Pilate, saying that He was a sorcerer and extremely wicked; and with their tumultuous uproar they brought it about that he crucified Him.’

14. ‘He, foreseeing that this would advance the world towards salvation, allowed Himself to be arrested and mocked and beaten, and likewise executed. For He knew that only through His suffering would He enforce captivity on the devil and inflict heavy tortures on the impure spirits. Accordingly, He at length is arrested Who had not committed any crime, so that the race of mankind would be released, which was being held tightly bound in the fetters of sin. The Blessed One is cursed, so that God should take us away from malediction. He allowed Himself to be mocked, so that He could remove us

⁴⁷ Cf. Matt. 4: 17 (‘paenitentiam agite adpropinquavit enim regnum caelorum’).

⁴⁸ Cf. Matt. 5: 19.

⁴⁹ Matt. 23: 39; Mark 11: 9; Luke 13: 35 and 19: 38; John 12: 13.

from the mocking of demons which prevails in this world. He accepted a crown of thorns on His head, so that He could snatch us from the capital punishment which was owed to us from the thorns of our sins. He accepted poison in his food so that He could exchange it for the sweet taste (experienced by) first man, whence death had come into the world. He drank vinegar, so that He would take into His own body the bitterness with which our blood had boiled up, and would Himself drink the chalice of poison which is rendered to our passions. He was stripped naked, so that, with the snowy-white covering of clothing, He could hide our (first) parents' nakedness, which to His grief had been brought about by the serpent's advice. He was hanged on a wooden cross, so that He could take away the transgression of the cross with the wood of His own suffering, and He allowed death to come to Him, so that He could defeat it as it struggled against Him, and which through the serpent had discovered its own realm, and through Christ would become a defeated captive with the serpent itself. In the event, when all the elements saw their Creator raised up on the Cross, they trembled in great terror. For on one hand the earth was moved, on the other temples and stones were burst asunder. Daylight fled; the sun was frightened and grew dark, and showed the whole world to be in mourning. The moon covered the pale countenance of its light with a bloody cloud. All the stars, normally radiant with sidereal light, departed; the earth gives out a moan, and, as if giving birth, began to bring forth many saints from their tombs, who would provide this testimony, that the Saviour's descent to hell seized that kingdom from the devil, and (that He) by dying captured death and subdued it and bound it and subjected it beneath the feet of His own servants. Whence it is that for His name we rejoice to be beaten and glory in the persecutions, because that eternal life will follow on this transient and wretched life of ours—(eternal life) which the Son of God, arising from the dead, showed to His apostles, as He ascended to the heavens with them watching Him. If the testimony of (even) three witnesses was to report this, the minds of wise men could not doubt it. But in fact He deigned to reveal Himself not only to twelve disciples but also to more than five hundred (witnesses), and (therefore) left no trace of doubt whatsoever. Those (apostles), who were sent to preach these things throughout the entire world, confirmed their statements by means of signs and magnificent miracles. For they cured all illnesses in His name, put demons to flight, and granted life to the dead.'

15. 'I think that there is nothing remaining which you could question, but that you should despise this life with your heart and soul, and seek that (eternal) life ardently and actively. For he who will believe in the Son of God and will adhere to His teachings, when he lays down his body is not touched by death but is taken up into the bosom of the holy angels and is led to the realm of Paradise. Hence it is that death itself, (in league) with the devil, is engaged to impede the minds of men with diverse occupations, and to occupy

the heedless with various exigencies: now it provokes fear of loss, now it arouses (hope of) gain, now it entices with beauty, now it excites with gluttony, and with various kinds of argument it makes wretched men think about this life alone, so that it will find them naked as they leave the body, taking nothing with them but their sins.⁵⁰ I have explained these things to you briefly. If you think you lack something, ask.'

16. Then Tiburtius, throwing himself at her feet, said with a mighty moan: 'If I should reflect further in my mind on this life, or should explore it in my thought, I shall not be found in that (eternal) life. Let fools have the luxury of wasting time. Up until today I lived without a reason; it cannot now be (possible) that I (continue to) live without a reason.' And having said this, he turned to his brother: 'Pity me, dear brother, and end the delay⁵¹ whose hindrance I will not tolerate. I fear postponements, I cannot bear their burden. I beg you, take me to the man of God, so that in purifying me he may make me a participant in that life which follows on from this one.' Then Valerian took him to Pope Urban. When he had explained everything to him, and all the things which had been said and done, he [Urban] received Tiburtius with great joy, giving thanks to God, and, baptizing him, asked him to remain with him until he put off his white baptismal garments.⁵² After seven days he consecrated him as a soldier of Christ, (now) fully accomplished in his doctrine; and he thereafter attained such grace of the Lord, that he even saw angels of God every day, and for everything which he sought from the Lord, a result quickly followed. But because it is a considerable task for me to describe in sequence what great miracles the Lord accomplished through them, let me call back my pen to (describe) their glorious martyrdoms.⁵³

17. Turcius Almachius, the urban prefect,⁵⁴ was vigorously butchering the saints of God, and was ordering that their bodies be left unburied. Tiburtius and Valerian occupied themselves daily in order to provide precious burials for the martyrs, attending them with alms and devotions. Meanwhile, as is usual, wicked persons detest the good, and all these things which the Lord was

⁵⁰ As de Vogüé notes, this phrase ('nihil secum praeter peccata portantes') is also found in the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.11), and is recycled by the author of the *Regula Magistri* in the early sixth century: de Vogüé, 'La passion de sainte Cécile', pp. 8–9.

⁵¹ A poetic phrase (*rumpe moras*) first coined by Vergil, and used by many later poets: Vergil, *Georg.* iii. 43, *Aen.* iv. 569, ix. 13; Ovid, *Met.* xv. 583; Lucan, *De bello civili* ii. 525; etc.

⁵² Tiburtius is now dressed in the white baptismal clothing (*in albis*), on which see n. 38.

⁵³ With this last sentence, cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.73): 'But because it is a substantial undertaking if we wish to follow what and how great were the accomplishments that Christ worked through these (saints), let us simply explain how each one arrived at the palm of martyrdom' (p. 129).

⁵⁴ No urban prefect named Turcius Almachius is recorded during the years 222–30: see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, at pp. 120–1. However, Vigneaux (*Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 235–7) notes that the *gens Turcii* was well attested in the time of Constantine, and therefore that 'un Turcius Almachius a donc bien pu être préfet'; but this strikes me as wishful thinking.

performing through them in respect of the needy, and how eagerly they were burying those whom he had ordered to be executed, are reported to Almachius the prefect. On hearing this, the prefect ordered them to come before him, and immediately they are presented by his agents. Almachius addressed them with these words: 'Although the distinction of your nobility caused you to be born to the clarissimate (*clarissimi*), why do you reveal yourselves as wretched and degenerate through some sort of superstition? For I hear that you are expending your resources on certain lowly persons who were punished for their crimes, and are committing them to burial with every kind of distinction; whence one is given to understand that your people are well aware that they are committing them to honest burial through conspiracy.' In reply Tiburtius said: 'O would that they deigned to count us among their servants, whom you think are colleagues of those who scorn what seems to be and is not, and have discovered that which seems not to be and is!'⁵⁵ Almachius said: 'What is it that seems to be and is not?' Tiburtius said: 'All the things which exist in this world which seduce men's minds to perpetual death through temporary delight.' Almachius said: 'And what is it that does not seem to be, and is?' Tiburtius said: 'The life which is owed to the just and the punishment which is owed to the wicked, we know from every kind of evidence to exist: that what comes (to us) through unfortunate disguise, that what we know we see with the eyes of our mind we remove with the eyes of our body so that, against our conscience, we obscure the things which are good with evil speech, and embellish the things which are evil with good speech.' Almachius said: 'I do not think that you are speaking with your intellect.' Tiburtius said: 'I do not speak things of my own, but of Him Whom I accepted into the inwards of my mind.' Almachius said: 'Do you yourself know what you are saying?' Tiburtius said: 'I know and learned and believe that all the things which I said will last to the end, just as I said them.' Almachius said: 'And as for me, why do I not grasp what order you are telling (me) these things?' Tiburtius said: 'Because man, as an animal, does not perceive the things which are the spirit of God. As spirit He judges all things; and He is not judged by anyone.'

18. Then the prefect, with a smile, ordered Tiburtius to be removed and Valerian to be brought in; to whom he said: 'Because your brother is not of sane mind, you at least will be able to reply sensibly.' Valerian says to him: 'Your hearing is subject to error, because you cannot understand the implication of our words.' The prefect said: 'No one is in error in the way that you (two) are erring, who, having abandoned necessary and useful things, are following foolishness and idle leisure, rejecting joys and cursing happiness and scorning everything which is granted in life by way of pleasure; with

⁵⁵ Cf. Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, ix. 20: 'sed caecitatis duo species facile concurrunt, ut qui non vident quae sunt, videre videntur quae non sunt' (CCSL I, p. 105), a parallel pointed out by Caponi, 'Ultimi studi', p. 28.

mental enthusiasm you adopt that which is contrary to well-being and inimical to joy.' Valerian replied to these (remarks): 'I have seen people engaged in various frolics pass joking and laughing through the fields in a time of glacial frost, in which fields the peasants stood digging, and planting sprouts with every concern, and gathering the thorny shoots of rose-bushes eagerly and carefully. Some were planting cuttings, others were ripping up weeds by the root, and all of them were pursuing all the tasks of the countryside with heavy labour. Then those who were frolicking began to ridicule the labourers, and to say: "Unhappy and wretched people, abandon this useless labour and give yourselves over to delights and pleasures by celebrating with us. Why like madmen do you exhaust yourselves with hard work and vex the years of your life with harsh activities?" And after saying these things, they dissolved in laughter at them and clapped their hands, taunting them with many reproaches. For those people doing these chores, serene weather followed the cold and rainy months. And behold, the fields, blooming with roses, were adorned with sprouting groves and revealed curling shoots of grapes;⁵⁶ with their rebirth they grew branches and honeyed fruit from the various kinds of trees, in which we see beauty and fruit and splendour abounding up to the present day. Then with those (workers) rejoicing who were thought to be idle, those who seemed to be city-dwellers began to weep; and those who had gloried in their wisdom perished in a plague, and, producing with overdue repentance moans and groans for their idleness, said to one another: "These are the ones whom we held in derision; we thought that their labour was a disgrace, we cursed their life as wretched, we judged their character to be shameful and their assembly to be without honour. But they are proved to be wise and we (are proved) to have been wretches and fools and nullities when we ourselves did no work and did not offer assistance for their labour to those who were working. Indeed, when we were enjoying our pleasures we ridiculed them, and believed them to be foolish, whom we now see to be gleaming and flourishing."'

19. To this the prefect said: 'I see that you present yourself sensibly, but you do not seem to have given a reply to my question.' Valerian said: 'You said that we were fatuous and foolish because we expend our resources on the needy, take in strangers, offer assistance to widows, provide for orphans, cover over unburied corpses and give honest burial to God's martyrs. You judge us to be foolish and thoroughly insane because we do not celebrate with the partygoers, nor do we lay ourselves open to voluptuous delights, and do not show ourselves as illustrious and noble in the eyes of the not ignoble populace.'

⁵⁶ On the unusual form *butronum* (gen. pl.), 'bunches (of grapes)', see *TLL* II, col. 2260, line 55 (where *butro* is treated as identical to *botrus* (from Greek βότρυς), on which see *ibid.* cols. 2147–8; the various sources cited by *TLL* suggest that the transmitted form *butronum* should probably be spelled *botryonum*).

There shall come a time in which we gather the fruits of this our sorrow, and as we rejoice those who now are exalted with their rejoicing will mourn. For now is the time for sowing; those who sow joys in this life will reap lamentation and sorrow in that life. And those who now sow temporal tears are to reap joy in that eternal life.'

20. The prefect said: 'And so we and the unconquerable Emperors shall have eternal grief, but you shall possess perpetual joy?' Valerian said: 'What are you, or what are your emperors? Little men born in your time, set to die when your time is up, only to render account to God for what He handed to you as the apex of power.' Almachius said: 'Why are we wasting time in circles of words? Make offerings to the gods and depart unharmed.' They both replied:⁵⁷ 'We daily make sacrifice to the living God, not to gods.' Almachius said: 'Who is God to Whom you say that you have committed your service?' They both replied: 'Who is God other than (our) God, given that you ask us about Him?' The prefect said: 'This one god whom you mention: tell me his name.' Valerian said: 'You will not find the name of God, even if you could fly on wings.' Almachius said: 'And is the name of God therefore not Jupiter?' Valerian replied: 'That is the name of a man who is a corrupter (of women) and a scandalmonger. Our authors describe him as a homicide, and your literature shows him to be a criminal.'⁵⁸ You admire this god with the rashness of which you have spoken, whereas God cannot be described, except that He is remote from all sin and is filled with all virtues.' Almachius said: 'And is the entire world mistaken, therefore, and you and your brother know the true God?' Valerian replied: 'An innumerable multitude has received the sacrament of Christianity, and you few who remain are rather like splinters of wood from a shipwreck—(useful) for nothing, except that you be cast into the fire.'

21. Then Almachius, enraged, orders him to be beaten with staves. He (Valerian), as soon as he had been stripped, began to rejoice, saying: 'Behold, here is the hour which I have always hoped for, here is the day delightful to me for all celebration.' While they were beating him, the herald's voice was shouting out over him: 'Do not blaspheme the gods and goddesses.' But he shouted out, saying to the people: 'Roman citizens, observe that this beating does not recall me from the truth. But stand there bravely, and turn the stone (idols of) gods, which Almachius worships, into powder, because all those who worship them will end up in eternal anguish.'

22. Then Tarquinius Lacca, the prefect's principal legal adviser (*assessor*),⁵⁹ said to the prefect: 'You have found a pretext: take them away. For if you delay

⁵⁷ Arnobius has apparently forgotten that Tiburtius was taken out, and that Valerian alone is being interrogated.

⁵⁸ The crimes of Jupiter (as well as other gods): this is a frequent topos in these *passiones*; see esp. those of Sebastian (III.41), Chrysanthus and Daria (X.10–12), etc.

⁵⁹ On the role of the principal legal adviser (*assessor*), see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 500–3, and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, p. 178.

and draw this out from day to day, they will expend all their wealth on the poor, and when they have been punished, you will find nothing (is left).'⁶⁰ Then he gave orders to the executioners that they [Valerian and Tiburtius] were to be taken by them to the *Pagus*⁶¹ where there was a small statue of Jupiter, and ordered that, if they did not wish to sacrifice, both brothers should undergo capital punishment. Then the glorious martyrs, having received this sentence, were seized by Maximus, an official of the judiciary (*cornicularius*), and taken to the *Pagus*. This Maximus began to weep over them, saying: 'O brilliant flower of youth, O brotherly love, which you wish to lose through wicked decree, and hasten to your death as if you were going to dinner!' Then Tiburtius said: 'If we had not learned for certain that there is another everlasting life which follows this life, we would never rejoice to lose this one.' Maximus says to him: 'And what could this other life be?' Tiburtius replies: 'Just as the body is clothed with clothing, so the soul is clothed with a body; and just as the body is stripped of its clothing, so the soul is stripped of its body. And indeed the body, which produced earthly seed through sexual desire, is restored to its earthly womb, so, as it is reduced to dust, it will rise again like the phoenix in the visibility of future light, but the soul, if it is holy, may be borne to the delights of paradise, so that, abounding in delights, it can await the moment of its resurrection.'

23. Maximus says to him: 'I should myself wish to despise this life, if I could know that what you say is certain.' Valerian says to him: 'Because you say that nothing remains for you, except that you prove what we say to be true, in the hour in which God will cause us to lay down this covering of the flesh in glorious confession of His name, He will open your eyes and cause you to see with what glory that life is undertaken, if only you would promise us that you will come with all your heart to repentance for your error.' Then Maximus made a vow, saying: 'I shall be consumed by fiery thunderbolts if from this time forth I do not confess only this one God Who caused the other life to succeed this one. Only reveal this (God) to me, as you promised.' The brothers both say to him: 'Obtain (permission) from the executioners that they may take us to your house, and explain to them the present day's adjournment, so that they may guard us in your house. There we will arrange to have the agent

⁶⁰ Lacca is referring to the law concerning *bona damnatorum*, by which the property of condemned criminals was confiscated by the imperial treasury (*res privata*); see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 421–3.

⁶¹ The place called *Pagus*: according to c. 24, *Locus igitur qui vocabatur Pagus quarto miliario ab urbe situs erat*; we are subsequently told that there was a temple dedicated to Jupiter there, through which those who pass were obliged to offer incense to the god (c. 24). According to Tomassetti and Tomassetti, there was a small group of buildings at the fourth mile of the Via Appia, but no trace of a Christian cemetery: *La campagna romana* II, pp. 123–4; but see esp. Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 283–4 (Unità Topografica 484), and *eadem*, 'Dianae templum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II pp. 199–200.

of purification come to you, who tonight, immediately as he has purified you, will cause you to see that which we promised you.' When Maximus had obtained this, he led them to his house; on (hearing) their preaching, Maximus himself, together with his entire household, as well as the executioners, believed (in Christ). Then St Caecilia came to them at night, accompanied by priests, and they were all baptized. Therefore, when dawn put an end to the night, Caecilia, having requested silence, said: 'Come, you soldiers of Christ, cast off the works of shadows and gird yourselves with the weapons of light. "You have fought a good fight, you have finished the course, you have kept your faith: proceed to the crown of life, which God the Just Judge shall grant to you—(and) not only you, but all those who appreciate His coming"'.⁶²

24. The place which was called the *Pagus* was located at the fourth mile from the City; in this (place) was a passage through the door of a temple, such that everyone who entered would be punished if they did not offer incense to Jupiter. As the saints arrive there, incense is offered to them and they refuse; they go down on their knees; they are struck with the sword, they cast off their temporal bodies and take on eternal martyrdom. Then Maximus declared an oath, saying: 'I saw the angels of God shining like the sun at the moment they were struck with the sword, and (I saw) their souls departing from their bodies like virgins from a bridal chamber; the angels, receiving them [the souls], bore them to the heavens with the beating of their wings.' As Maximus was tearfully reporting these things, many believed (in Christ), and, converted from the error of idol-worship, rendered themselves up to their Creator. Accordingly, when news reached Almachius that Maximus his secretary had become a Christian together with his entire household, he ordered him to be beaten with lead-weighted whips until he gave up the ghost. St Caecilia buried him in a new sarcophagus next to Tiburtius and Valerian.⁶³ And she ordered that a phoenix be carved on his sarcophagus as an indication of his faith, because he undertook to experience resurrection on the model of the phoenix.⁶⁴

25. It happened following this that Almachius began to enquire after their wealth;⁶⁵ as a result of these enquiries, he ordered that the holy Caecilia be placed under house arrest, inasmuch as she was the wife of Valerian. When she had duly given to the poor everything which remained of their [Tiburtius' and Valerian's] wealth, she too started to be urged to offer incense. Then she said to the agents who were pushing her to do this: 'Listen to me, citizens and

⁶² II Tim. 4: 7–8.

⁶³ On the supposed burial of St Maximus in the cemetery of Praetextatus, see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 179–81.

⁶⁴ On the phoenix as a symbol of Christian resurrection, see F. Bisconti, 'Aspetti e significati del simbolo della fenice nella letteratura e nell'arte del Cristianesimo primitivo'; cf. also Connolly, 'The Legend of St Cecilia', pp. 26–7.

⁶⁵ The urban prefect is hoping to get his hands on the property of Caecilia before she spends it all, so it can be sequestered by the imperial treasury as *bona damnatorum*; see n. 59.

brothers, you are ministers of your judge, and it seems to you that you ought not to be averse to his wickedness. But for me, it is glorious and greatly desirable to suffer all torments for Christ, because I never deigned to have any association with this life; but I greatly grieve for your youth, in which you are performing without anxiety whatever should be commanded of you by an unjust judge.' Then they uttered moans and laments that so elegant and wise and even noble a young girl should be opting to be killed. And they asked her, saying that she should not disregard her rank, that she should not turn over such great beauty to death.

26. She spoke thus to those who were weeping and seeking to reverse her intentions: 'This is not to lose one's youth but to exchange it; to surrender mud and receive gold; to surrender a filthy and tiny dwelling-place and receive a great and roomy dwelling constructed from gold and precious stones; to surrender a tiny and cramped nook and receive a bright forum gleaming with heavenly pearls; to surrender a perishable thing and receive one which knows no end and is ignorant of death; to surrender a common stone which is trodden underfoot and receive a precious stone which shines with glittering aspect in a royal diadem. If someone today were to offer you money, such that he would (later) receive back from you a sum of money greater than what he had offered, would you not run rejoicing to (accept) such a bargain, and cause your parents and those known to you—neighbours and relatives and dear friends and associates—to run with you? Whoever would call you back with tears because you would fearlessly give away all your money—would you not ridicule them as ignorant and unknowing? You would run forward rejoicing because you would hand over common brass coinage for conversion into gold and no loss of value, and yet you are delighted to receive pound for pound in exchange. God does not give pound for pound, but what He takes as a small weight He returns a hundredfold, and moreover (grants) eternal life.' And having said this, she climbs up on a stone which was next to her feet, and says to all of them: 'Do you believe in what I said?' And they all said in unison: 'We believe that Christ, the Son of God, is the true God Who has you as such a (remarkable) servant.' Caecilia says to them: 'Go, therefore, and say to the wretched Almachius that I seek an adjournment that he not press forward with my martyrdom. And I shall cause to come here into my house someone who will make you all participants in eternal life.' And through God's intervention it came to pass accordingly.

27. Then Pope Urban baptized on his arrival in her house more than four hundred people of both sexes and of various statuses and ages,⁶⁶ among whom

⁶⁶ The process of conversion and baptism in a private house is a feature of a number of *passiones* of popes, and has been studied by Kristina Sessa, 'Domestic Conversions', esp. pp. 99–114 (she does not, however, discuss the present *passio* of St Caecilia, even though the four hundred baptisms were described as being performed by Pope Urban in Caecilia's *domus*).

there was one distinguished senator (*vir clarissimus*) named Gordianus. This man re-registered under the disguise of his own name the house of Caecilia,⁶⁷ so that there, from that day onwards, (the house) where baptism in the name of Christ was taking place would become a church, such that even Pope Urban could live there, and the benefits of Christ's redemption would increase there every day, though in secret, and there would be infinite losses to the devil.

28. But while these things were taking place, Almachius orders Caecilia to be brought before him. He said to her by way of interrogation: 'What is your name?' She replied: 'Caecilia'. Almachius said: 'What is your rank?' Caecilia replied: 'I am freeborn, a lady of senatorial rank (*clarissima*).' Almachius said: 'I am asking you about your religion.' Caecilia replied: 'Your interrogation got off to a stupid beginning: it assumes that the one interrogation can be concluded in two replies.' Almachius said: 'Where do you get such audacity in replying (thus)?' Caecilia replied: 'From my good conscience and my unfeigned faith.' Almachius said: 'Are you unaware of what power I represent?' Caecilia replied: 'You are unaware of what power you represent. For if you were to interrogate me concerning your power, I would reveal it to you in true statements.' Almachius says to her: 'Speak, if you know anything.' Caecilia replied: 'All human authority is as if it were a bladder filled with air, in which, if a needle were to puncture it, all the strength of its pretence would grow soft, and whatever is perceived as stiff in it is collapsed.' Almachius said: 'You have begun with insults, and you persist in insults.' Caecilia replied: 'Something is not said to be an insult unless it is advanced in deceitful words. Whence either show me that what I said was false, or chastise yourself for bringing a false accusation.'

29. Almachius said: 'Are you unaware that our lords, the unconquerable emperors, ordered that those who do not deny that they are Christians are to be punished, but those who deny it are to be released?'⁶⁸ Caecilia replied: 'Your emperors are in error, just like your good self. The edict which you testify was promulgated by them shows that you are mad and that we are innocent. For if this name [*sc. the nomen Christianum*]⁶⁹ is evil, we would not deny it; but you will not have forced us to confess by means of torture.'⁷⁰ Almachius said:

⁶⁷ The principal intention in re-registering Caecilia's house is to elude confiscation by the imperial agents; but this statement raises the possibility that the church of St Caecilia, which first appears in the records (AD 499) as the *titulus Caeciliae*, was previously known as the *titulus Gordiani*, even though no such registration is found in the records. See discussion by Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'Recenti studi intorno a S. Cecilia', p. 10, and Delehay, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 84–5.

⁶⁸ Cf. the wording of the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.77): 'Are you unaware of what the unconquerable emperors have decreed, that whoever refuses to sacrifice to the gods will be lacerated by various tortures?' (p. 131).

⁶⁹ On the *nomen Christianum*, see n. 27.

⁷⁰ Cf. Tertullian, *Apologeticum* ii. 10: 'Si malum esset, nos quidem negaremus, uos uero confiteri tormentis compelleretis...ceteris negantibus tormenta adhibetis ad confitendum, solis

'Because of their piety they wished to promulgate this, so that it could be experienced as beneficial to your life.' Caecilia replied: 'There is nothing so wicked and nothing so inimical to innocence as the fact that you use torture on all guilty persons to make them confess the nature of their crime. You seek with all your interrogation to know the place, the time, the associates involved, but for us whom you know to be innocent you seize on the crime of a mere name. But we who know that this name is sacred cannot deny it in any way. For it is better to die blessedly than to live unhappily. You, who are at pains to hear falsehood, will torture us who speak the truth.' Almachius says: 'Choose one of two things for yourself:⁷¹ either sacrifice or else deny that you are a Christian, so that you may receive the advantages of escaping (torture).' Then the blessed Caecilia said, smiling: 'O judge confused by circumstances!—he wishes that I deny that I am innocent, so that he may make me guilty!⁷² If you wish to condemn me, why do you urge me to denial? If you wish to absolve me, why do you not wish to investigate?' Almachius said: 'There are accusers at hand who testify that you are thoroughly Christian. If you should deny it, I shall give short shrift to the accusers. If you should not wish to deny it, you will reflect upon your foolishness when you are subject to sentencing.' Caecilia said: 'Their accusation is desirable to me, and your punishment (is my) victory. Do not accuse me of being foolish, but upbraid yourself for thinking that I would deny Christ.'

30. Almachius said: 'Wretch, are you unaware that the power of granting death and life is given to me by the unconquerable emperors? Why do you speak with such great arrogance?' Caecilia replied: 'It is one thing to be arrogant, another thing to be consistent. I have spoken consistently, not arrogantly, because we strongly repudiate arrogance. If you are not afraid to hear the truth, I shall teach you once more that you have spoken very falsely just now.' Almachius says: 'What falsehoods did I utter?' Caecilia said: 'The fact that you claim that your emperors have given to you the power of granting life and death.' Almachius said: 'Did I therefore lie?' Caecilia said: 'If you ask me, I shall prove that you lied against the common truth.' Almachius said: 'Teach me.' Caecilia replied: 'You said that your emperors had bestowed on you the facility of giving life and death, whereas you know that only the power of giving death was granted to you; for you can take away life from the living, but you cannot give life to the dead: say, therefore, that your emperors wished you to be an agent of death. For if you should say anything more, you will see

Christianis ad negandum' (CCSL I, p. 89). The parallel was pointed out by Caponi, 'Ultimi studi', p. 28.

⁷¹ Cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.81): 'Choose one of two things' (p. 133).

⁷² A sentence indebted to Tertullian, *Apologeticum* ii. 8: 'O sententiam necessitate confusam!...parcit et saeuit, dissimulat et animaduertit'; ii. 17: 'Vis ergo neget se nocentem ut eum facias innocentem' (CCSL I, pp. 88, 90). The parallel was first pointed out by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, p. 293.

that you have lied in vain.’ Almachius said: ‘Abandon your impudence and sacrifice to the gods.’ Caecilia replied: ‘I do not know where you lost your eyesight. For those whom you call gods: both I and all those who have healthy eyesight see that they are stones and bronze and lead.’ Almachius said: ‘I philosophically overlooked the insults to myself, but I cannot tolerate those to the gods.’ Caecilia said: ‘From the moment you opened your mouth, your speech was nothing which I did not experience as unjust, stupid, and vain. But in order that nothing should be lacking from external (appearances), you show yourself to be blind in the eyes, when what we all see to be useless stone you claim is god. If you ask, I give you some advice. Put out your hand and learn from touching it that this is a stone, if you did not know this from looking at it. For it is a sin if the entire populace should have a laugh at your expense. For everyone knows that God is in the heavens, and that these stone statues can best be turned into quicklime in the fire—(statues) which now perish through their inactivity and, if they are cast into the fire, could help neither you nor themselves as they perish.’

31. Then Almachius, greatly enraged, ordered her to be taken back home and to be cremated in the fires (which heat the) baths in her house.⁷³ And when she had been enclosed in the heat of her bath, and they had placed the nourishment of firewood beneath the flames, she lasted with unimpaired health for an entire day and night as if she were in a cool place, such that not even one part of her limbs drooped with any sign of sweat. When Almachius heard this, he sent someone who would decapitate her in the baths. The executioner⁷⁴ struck her three times, but failed to cut off her head.⁷⁵ And thus the bloody murderer abandoned her half-dead; the people who had come to believe through her wiped up her blood with linen cloths.⁷⁶

⁷³ The room identified as a ‘bath’ (*balneum*) in the *domus* of Caecilia is a crypt located directly beneath the present chapel dedicated to St Caecilia (on the right-hand side of the nave); adjacent to it is an opening identified as a *praefurnium* (‘heating-room’). See *LTUR* I, fig. 114 (the room marked F), and N. Parmegiani and A. Pronti, ‘Il complesso archeologico sotto la basilica di S. Cecilia in Trastevere’, *Atti degli incontri di studio del Comitato per l’archeologia laziale* 10 (1990), 105–11; Parmegiani and Pronti, *S. Cecilia in Trastevere*, pp. 67–72, with figs. 60–5, as well as pp. 309–17 (Appendix IV: Il *Balneum*); and N. Parmegiani, ‘Domus: Caecilii’, *LTUR* II, pp. 71–2.

⁷⁴ Reading *spiculator* for Delehay’s *speculator*; for the word *spiculator* (‘executioner’), see Souter, p. 384.

⁷⁵ An executioner was prevented by Roman law from striking more than three times; so if his attempts at decapitation failed on three attempts, the criminal was allowed to go free (if no doubt horrendously mutilated), as in the present case of Caecilia.

⁷⁶ It is not precisely clear what the Christians used to wipe up Caecilia’s blood (*sanguinem bibleis linteaminiibus...extergebant*): *linteamina* are cloths, but what were the cloths made of (*biblea*)? On the rare form *bibleus*, apparently an adjective of material formed from *biblus* with the termination *-eus*, see *TLL* II, col. 1959, lines 14–16 (citing *CGL* V, col. 614, apparently the unique recorded instance of this word); Greek *βύβλος* originally meant the rind or bark of the papyrus plant (hence, later, ‘book’): are we to understand that they wiped up the martyr’s blood with sheets of papyrus?

For the three days she remained alive, she did not cease from comforting all those whom she had nourished and instructed in faith in the Lord; she shared out everything she owned among them, and entrusted them to Pope Urban; to whom she said: 'I sought for myself a three-day postponement, so that I could entrust these people to your blessed self, and could consecrate this my house with the title of a church.'⁷⁷

32. Then St Urban, together with his deacons, bearing away her body, buried her at night amongst his colleagues the bishops,⁷⁸ where all confessors and martyrs are located. He handed over her house to holy church in perpetuity, in which God's benefits abound up to the present day; and Christ is blessed there, Who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

⁷⁷ On the *titulus*-church of Caecilia, see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 113–16; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 220–4; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 229; and Vielliard, *Recherches sur les origines*, p. 101.

⁷⁸ The statement that Pope Urban buried her *inter collegas suos episcopos* (c. 32) refers unambiguously to the famous 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus; what has been identified by de Rossi and has come to be known as the 'Crypt of St Caecilia' lies adjacent to the 'Papal Crypt'; see p. 141 with n. 14.

V

Pope Clement

c.450; relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Clement (Caelian Hill)

The present *passio* of Pope Clement describes the activities of the bishop of Rome during the principates of Nerva (96–8) and Trajan (98–117), as well as his martyrdom in exile, far away from Rome, across the Black Sea in what is now called the Crimea.¹ Although the dates of his pontificate are not precisely known, there is no doubt that there was a pope named Clement at the end of the first century: Eusebius, in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, mentions him on several occasions, and notes that he died in the third year of Trajan's principate (iii. 34), which corresponds to 100 AD. Significantly, Eusebius does not state that Pope Clement was a martyr. Clement is recorded as the third successor of St Peter in the *Liber pontificalis*.² He was, in short, a well-known figure in the early Roman church, whether or not he was known as a martyr.

The author of the *passio*, however, proceeded on the assumption that the martyr, who is the principal actor in his narrative, was identical with Pope Clement. His narrative is as follows. Clement, the third bishop of the church of Rome, was a popular figure because he was acceptable to pagans, Jews and Christians alike: to the pagans, because he could patiently explain the true nature of their gods; to Jews, because he could explain how prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled in the New; and to Christians, because he kept a written record of all the believing poor in Rome (c. 1). One of his Christian congregation was Theodora, whose husband was Sisinnius, a friend of the emperor Nerva; when Theodora set off to church to pray, Sisinnius followed her, suspecting her of infidelity, but on entering the church he was struck blind and deaf (c. 2). Theodora asked Clement to help her husband; Clement went

¹ Listed *BHL* 1848 and *CPL* 2177. Studies on the text include: Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 160–2; Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'La leggenda di S. Clemente', pp. 1–40; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 96–116; *BSS* IV, cols. 38–48 [G. Zannoni and M. C. Celletti]; *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* III, cols. 188–206 [A. Stuiber]; *EP* I, pp. 199–212, esp. 202–3 [F. Scorza Barcellona]; Pouderon, 'Clément de Rome'; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 88–96; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 301–3.

² *LP* (ed. Mommsen, p. 7; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 123–4; trans. Davis, p. 3).

trustingly to her house, and was able to cure Sisinnius of his blindness and deafness (c. 3). Sisinnius then confessed to Theodora the reasons why he had followed her to church, and stated that he wished to become a Christian; he was duly baptized, and as a result of his conversion many other illustrious senators were converted to Christianity (c. 4). At this point a sedition was stirred up against Clement, and the urban prefect, one Mamertinus, summoned Clement to his presence; but Clement was able to persuade Mamertinus of the rational basis of his belief (c. 5). When the emperor, now Trajan, heard of this, he ordered that Clement be sent in exile to Cherson in the Crimea on the Black Sea; when he arrived there, Clement found a large community of Christians condemned to working in quarries (c. 6). Because there was no source of water near the quarries, Clement prayed, and miraculously a spring poured forth; because of the miracle many more people were converted, and when this was reported to Trajan, he sent a military commander named Aufidianus, who attempted to compel Clement to sacrifice; when he refused, Aufidianus ordered him to be thrown into the sea with an anchor around his neck; but after Clement had been drowned in this way, the sea miraculously receded 3 miles, which allowed the Christians to find Clement's body and place it in a sarcophagus, and the sea continued to recede miraculously every year on the saint's feast day, so that the community could continue to venerate its saint (c. 7).

According to this account, the place of Clement's martyrdom was so far away, and so far beneath the sea, that no Roman church could reasonably expect to acquire his relics. But it is also the case that there was a *titulus*-church in the name of Clement—the *titulus Clementis*—on the Caelian Hill in Rome, dating at latest from the end of the fifth century, inasmuch as priests from this church attended the Roman synod of 499.³ The church itself was built a century earlier, at the end of the fourth century,⁴ over a late-first-century public building, perhaps a mint or storage facility, into the lower floor of which a Mithraeum was inserted at the end of the second or beginning of the third century.⁵ The nave of the late antique church had five arcades which,

³ MGH, AA XII, pp. 411–12 (nos. 5 [*presbyter tituli Clementis*], and 6 and 24 [*presbyter tituli sancti Clementis*]); see discussion by Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 36–41; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 245–7; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 124; and Junyent, *Il titolo di San Clemente*, pp. 131–40.

⁴ The date is fixed by de Rossi's discovery of an inscription in S. Clemente in the name of Pope Siricius (384–98); the inscription is quoted by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 303, n. 65a.

⁵ Earlier studies of the late antique church include G. B. de Rossi, 'Prime origini della basilica di S. Clemente', *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 1 (1863), 25–31 and 89–90; *idem*, 'I monumenti scoperti sotto la Basilica di S. Clemente studiati nella loro successione stratigrafica e cronologica', *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 2nd ser. 1 (1870), 129–68, esp. 147–8; *DACL* III/2, cols. 1873–1902 [H. Leclercq]; Junyent, *Il titolo di San Clemente*, esp. pp. 141–85 ('La basilica sotterranea del titolo di S. Clemente'), with fig. 37; and Krauthheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 117–36, who bases his reconstruction on that of Junyent. The late antique church had three naves (separated by columns) and a semicircular apse at the west end, with an east-facing atrium.

as at S. Sebastiano, opened on an east-facing atrium, and which was magnificently renovated and embellished in the early sixth century by Pope John II (533–5).⁶ Excavations carried out since 1957, and latterly under the direction of Federico Guidobaldi, have elucidated the complex history of the late antique church, which lies beneath the present church of S. Clemente, as it stands a construction dating from the early twelfth century (1128), and one of the most beautiful churches in Rome.⁷

The identity of the Clement who donated the property on which the fourth-century church—the *titulus Clementis*—was constructed is unknown.⁸ However, it was inevitable that this unknown benefactor should become identified with the well-known Pope Clement and that, as in the case of many other *titulus*-churches in Rome, the church's founder should come to be regarded as a martyr. As we have seen, the historical Pope Clement was in no sense a martyr: he was not known to Eusebius as a martyr, and he is not recorded as such in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354.⁹ But the identification of the first-century pope with the person supposedly commemorated in the *titulus*-church was already familiar to St Jerome, who had left Rome for Jerusalem in 385, and who in his treatise *De uiris inlustribus* [CPL 616], composed in 392, stated that Pope Clement died in the third year of Trajan's principate and was memorialized in the church bearing his name in Rome (c. 15).¹⁰ But twenty-five years later, Pope Zosimus (417–18) recorded having attended a

⁶ While he was still a priest (named Mercurius), Pope John II made wealthy donations (including an altar and ciborium) to S. Clemente; as pope, he commissioned from workshops in Constantinople—the same workshops which produced similar artefacts for Hagia Sophia—the elaborate screen slabs of Proconnesian marble which decorated his reconstructed church. See Junyent, *Il titolo di San Clemente*, pp. 169–76, with fig. 48, and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 142–52, with pls. 72–3, and 294–5 (figs. XIX. 1–6).

⁷ See Federico Guidobaldi, *Il complesso archeologico di San Clemente* (detailed technical excavation report); *idem*, *San Clemente: gli edifici romani, la basilica paleocristiana e le fasi altomedievali*, I, pp. 125–56 (on the fourth-century basilica: 'La basilica absidiata'), 159–235 ('Interventi strutturali e decorativi nella basilica absidiata'), with figs. 101–51; and *idem*, 'Gli scavi del 1993–95' with pls. I–IV, as well as (briefly) *idem*, 'S. Clemens', *LTUR* I, pp. 278–9 and *idem*, 'Domus. Clemens', *LTUR* II, pp. 84–5.

⁸ Cf. Guidobaldi in *LTUR* II, p. 85: 'si dovrebbe però ritenere che il Clemens cristiano, eventuale proprietario e poi donatore, fosse un personaggio del IV sec., e cioè in analogia con quanto si è accertato per altri titoli di Roma.'

⁹ A martyr named Clement is listed against 9 November in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 636). However, the context of the entry—'Clement, Sempronianus, Clau<di>us, Nicostratus, in comitatum'—indicates that the reference is to the so-called 'Four Crowned Martyrs' (see no. XXIV), not to Pope Clement; in the entry in the *Depositio martyrum* the name 'Clement' has supplanted that of 'Castorius'. The confusion may be explained by the fact that the church on the Caelian Hill dedicated to the Four Crowned Martyrs stands very near that of S. Clemente.

¹⁰ *PL* XXIII, cols. 633–4: 'Obiit tertio Traiano [=AD 100], et nominis eius memoriam usque hodie Romae exstructa ecclesia custodit.' The compiler of the *Liber pontificalis*, writing more than a century later, took over this information from Jerome, but added that Clement had been martyred: 'He died a martyr in the third of Trajan [100]' (trans. Davis, p. 3).

conference 'in the basilica of St Clement, who, having been trained in the doctrine of St Peter the Apostle ... hallowed (the church) with his martyrdom'.¹¹ By the second decade of the fifth century, therefore, Pope Clement was known in Rome as a martyr who was memorialized in a church on the Caelian Hill.

However, the problem with identifying the church of St Clement with a (supposedly) martyred pope is that the martyr's remains were not to be found in the church, or indeed in any of the suburban cemeteries of Rome. If the fiction was to be maintained, it was necessary to locate the site of Clement's martyrdom so far away from Rome that there could be no expectation that the martyr's remains could be translated to the church bearing his name. And so the hagiographer chose a site on the very periphery of the known world, namely the city of Cherson in the Chersonesus (what is now called the Crimea);¹² furthermore, he embellished this fiction by stating that Clement had been martyred by being taken out on the Black Sea and being drowned by having an anchor tied to his neck (see c. 7), thus frustrating any desire to locate his relics. Whether the story of Clement's martyrdom in faraway Cherson is purely a fabrication by the hagiographer, or whether he was prompted by an unidentified (Greek?) source, cannot be determined.¹³ In any event, the fiction won widespread acceptance. The pilgrim Theodosius, writing his treatise *De situ terrae sanctae* [CPL 2328] in the early sixth century (c. 530) included in c. 12 an account of Clement's martyrdom which obviously derives from the present *passio*:

The city of Cherson, which is on the Black Sea: there St Clement was martyred. He suffered martyrdom in the sea and his *memoria* together with his body was put there. An anchor was tied to the neck of St Clement, and, on his feast day, the entire populace, with priests, gets into boats, and when they arrive there, the sea dries up for 6 miles; and there where his sarcophagus (*arca*) is located, tents are pitched and an altar set up, and mass is said there for eight days, and the Lord performs many miracles there.¹⁴

Half a century later (c.585) Gregory of Tours, in *De gloria martyrum*, c. 35, describes a miracle which occurred during one of these annual visitations to the site of Clement's martyrdom.¹⁵ It is clear that both Theodosius and

¹¹ *Ep.* ii. 2: 'resedimus in sancti Clementis basilica, qui imbutus beati Petri Apostoli disciplinis ... etiam martyrio consecraret' (PL XX, col. 650).

¹² Mark Humphries draws to my attention a relevant passage in Ammianus Marcellinus, describing the remoteness of the Sea of Azov and the Crimea: 'Hunorum gens monumentis veteribus leviter nota ultra paludes Maeoticas glaciale oceanum accolens, omnem modum feritatis excedit' (*Res gestae* xxxi. 2. 1).

¹³ There is a Greek text of the *passio* of Clement [BHG 344], but, as Franchi de' Cavalieri has demonstrated, the Greek text is a translation of the present Latin text ('La leggenda di S. Clemente', pp. 11–17); see also Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 106–8; and Amore, 'Note agiografiche sul calendario perpetuo', pp. 21–3.

¹⁴ CSEL XXXIX, pp. 135–50, at 143.

¹⁵ *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. R. Van Dam, TTH 3 (Liverpool, 1988), pp. 56–7.

Gregory were drawing on the present *passio* of Pope Clement. In any case, having devised a martyrdom in a very faraway place, the hagiographer had simply to devise some narrative means by which Clement could be transported to the Crimea; and he did this by having the emperor Trajan impose a sentence of banishment (c. 6). The essential point is that Clement's remains were in faraway Chersonesos, and could not be removed from there (c. 7: 'it was revealed to his disciples that they could not take his body away from there'), so there is no reason to expect to find them at his memorial church on the Caelian Hill.

The *passio* of Pope Clement was apparently composed at some point in the middle of the fifth century. On the one hand, it draws some of its phrasing from Arnobius' *passio* of St Sebastian; and Cécile Lanéry notes that it was used c.450 by the author of a liturgical *praefatio* composed for the church of Milan.¹⁶

Text. The Latin text of the *Passio S. Clementis* is problematical in the extreme. Although it is preserved in some 225 manuscripts, the earliest of which dates from the eighth century (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4554), no attempt has ever been made to collate more than two or three manuscripts, and the available editions are therefore constructed on an exceedingly narrow, and what may eventually prove to be unrepresentative, manuscript base. The printed editions in question are: Mombricitus I, pp. 341–4, based on a single, late medieval legendary from northern Italy, now lost; Fàbrega Grau, *Pasionario Hispanico*, II, pp. 40–6, based on a single tenth-century *passio* of Spanish origin; and C. Narbey, *Supplément aux Acta Sanctorum pour des vies de saints de l'époque mérovingienne*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1899–1912), II, pp. 333–6, based on three manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.¹⁷ None of these editions is satisfactory; even that of Narbey, on the face of it the most reliable, suffers from gross defects of editorial judgement (as when, for example, in c. 2, in lieu of *amicos Nervae imperatoris*, he prints the meaningless *amicos Minerve vel imperatoris* (p. 334)). In what follows,

¹⁶ Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 93, referring to A. Paredi, *I prefazi ambrosiani. Contributo alla storia della liturgia latina* (Milan, 1937).

¹⁷ Delehaye (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 101, n. 1) refers to 'an edition by F. Diekamp (Tübingen, 1913)'; but his reference is to the Greek text of the *passio* (BHG 349–50), not to the Latin text. The Greek text of the *Passio S. Clementis* is ed. F. X. Funk, *Patres apostolici* II (Tübingen, 1901), pp. 28–44, and Funk's edition was revised by F. Diekamp (Tübingen, 1913), with the text of the *Passio S. Clementis* at pp. 50–80. Funk helpfully provided a Latin translation of the Greek text on facing pages; but the resulting Latin text is not based on any manuscript witness: it is Funk's own. Unfortunately, Funk's Latin translation has been cited as a 'modern critical edition' by Sessa: 'a modern critical edition with apparatus has been produced, such as for the *Passio S. Clementis*, edited by Funk and Diekamp 1913' ('Domestic Conversions', p. 86, n. 26). Funk's edition does indeed have an apparatus criticus, but it reports readings from manuscripts of the Greek text. Sessa apparently misunderstood the reference in Delehaye's footnote.

I have principally followed the edition of Mombritius, but have collated the other two editions and have occasionally departed from what Mombritius prints. The chapter divisions are my own.

1. In those days the third bishop of the church of Rome was Clement,¹⁸ who, following the teaching of the Apostle Peter, prevailed so strongly with the adornment of his morals, that he was acceptable to both Jews and pagans,¹⁹ as well as to all Christian peoples, for (the nature of) his views. The pagans loved him, because by not cursing them but by giving reasonable explanations, he showed from their books and ceremonies whence came and where were born those whom they believed in and worshipped as gods; and he would teach these pagans from very revealing documents what the gods had done or failed to do, so that they could obtain forgiveness from God if they were to withdraw from worship of them and were to believe (in Christ). With respect to the Jews he proceeded in this way: he stated that their forefathers were the friends of God, and he reminded them that their law was holy and sacrosanct. He taught them that they would occupy the prime position if they were to keep the sacraments of their law, and would not deny that the promise of Abraham was fulfilled in Christ, because God in the seed of Abraham had promised that all his people would inherit both what he said to David—‘of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne’²⁰—and what he confirmed through Isaiah, that ‘a virgin shall conceive in her womb and shall give birth to a son whose name shall be called Emmanuel’.²¹ He [Clement] was greatly loved by the Christians because he kept a written record of the poor, individually named, in the several (ecclesiastical?) regions.²² And those whom the consecration of baptism had

¹⁸ According to the *Liber pontificalis*, Clement was indeed the third pope (following Linus and Cletus) after St Peter; the precise dates of his pontificate are unknown, save that, according to Jerome, he died in the third year of Trajan’s principate (see n. 9). Davis (*The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 3) assigns to Clement the dates AD c.95 to c.100.

¹⁹ On the Christians’ use of *gentilis* to mean ‘non-Christian’ or ‘pagan’, see TLL VI/2, col. 1869, as well as Isidore, *Etym.* viii. 10. 2, and discussion by Löfstedt, *Late Latin*, pp. 74–8.

²⁰ Ps. 131: 11. ²¹ Isaiah 7: 14.

²² The author does not specify whether he has in mind the fourteen civil regions established by Augustus (on which see the detailed discussion by Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, I, pp. 296–339, and II, pp. 1–178, with the edited text at II, pp. 539–74, as well as D. Palombi, ‘Regiones Quattuordecim (Topografia)’, *LTUR* IV, pp. 199–204), or the seven ecclesiastical regions, though presumably the latter is in question (but cf. c. 4, where the author refers unambiguously to the civil regions). The life of Clement in the *Liber pontificalis* states that ‘He created the seven regions, dividing them among notaries faithful to the church’ (trans. Davis, p. 3); but the author of *LP* was probably dependent here on the present *passio*, and will in any case have had in mind a subsequent statement in the life of Fabian, that ‘he divided the regions among the deacons and created seven subdeacons who were to watch over the seven notaries’ (*ibid.* p. 8). In the light of these testimonies, scholars attribute to Pope Fabian the creation of the seven ecclesiastical regions: see Franchi de’ Cavalieri, ‘La leggenda di S. Clemente’, p. 17, and Duchesne, ‘Les régions de Rome au moyen-âge’, in his *Scripta minora*, pp. 91–114 [originally publ. 1890]. In any event, the attribution of the seven ecclesiastical regions to Pope Clement and the late first century is a blatant anachronism.

illuminated he did not allow to become subject to public poverty; and so with his daily preaching he admonished both the middle classes and the wealthy not to allow the baptized poor to accept public donations from Jews or pagans, and thereby to pollute their lives, purified through the waters of baptism, with gifts from pagans.

2. As he was prevailing through these and other benefits of his preaching, he pleased God as much as all rational men. No one who is known to please God can please irrational men. Accordingly, those whose rationale was that they would not fear to displease non-believers did not fear injuries at the hands of irrational men. And thus it happened that Clement did not fear [Aurelian or] Sisinnius, friend[s] of the emperor Nerva,²³ [since Clement had consecrated the virgin Domitilla,²⁴ (who was) the niece of the emperor Domitian and the wife of Aurelian, with the sacred veil of purity];²⁵ and he in no wise prevented Theodora,²⁶ the wife of Sisinnius, who had been converted from idol worship, from confessing to God her undertaking of chastity. Theodora's husband (Sisinnius), driven by jealousy, secretly followed her as she was entering a church, desiring to see and hear what it was, and for what reason his wife was rushing off to church. And when prayers had been poured out by Clement and concluded, and 'Amen' had been pronounced by the people, Sisinnius was struck blind and deaf on the spot. Then Sisinnius says to his slaves: 'Pick me up quickly in your hands, and put me outside, because my eyes have been

²³ There is no life of Nerva in either Suetonius or the *SHA*, and the books of Ammianus Marcellinus which would have contained an account of his reign have been lost; the reign is known principally, therefore, from the epitome of Cassius Dio (*Hist. Rom.* lxxvii. 155–6, lxxviii. 1–3), Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 12 (trans. Bird, pp. 14–15), and Eutropius, *Breviarium* viii. 1 (trans. Bird, p. 48).

²⁴ The wife of the emperor Vespasian, Domitian's father, was named Flavia Domitilla (Suetonius, *Vitae Caesarum*, 'Vespasianus', c. 3), and the same name was borne by their daughter (Suetonius *ibid.*), who was Domitian's sister. The niece of Domitian, who was married to Flavius Clemens, was also named Flavia Domitilla (Suetonius, *Vitae Caesarum*, 'Domitianus', c. 15). In AD 95 Flavius Clemens was executed for 'atheism'; Flavia Domitilla was exiled to Pandataria (Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* lxxvii. 14, and Eusebius, *HE* iii. 18. 4, who states instead that she was exiled to Ponza). See discussion by Pouderon, 'Clément de Rome', pp. 197–201; and, for the hagiographical tradition by which Pope Clement was associated with Flavius Clemens, *ibid.* pp. 210–17.

²⁵ The words in square brackets here are later interpolations. Those concerning Domitilla and Aurelian ('And thus it happened . . . sacred veil of purity') derive from the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (VIII.9 *et passim*), where they are the two principal characters; in any case, Domitilla and Aurelian do not figure in the remainder of the present *passio*. See discussion by Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'La leggenda di S. Clemente', p. 13; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 102; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 94–5.

²⁶ In the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia) there was a fresco of a noble woman named Theodora who was evidently a Christian (she was depicted *orans*); the fresco had the legend 'TEVDORA IN PACE'. There is a reproduction of the painting by L. Perret, *Catacombes de Rome. Architecture, peintures murales, inscriptions, figures et symboles gravés sur pierre*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1851–5), I, pl. XLVIII. However, the painting reproduced by Perret is no longer to be seen, and is not calendared by Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*.

blinded and my ears made deaf, so that I am unable to see or hear anything at all.' His slave-boys went with him around the inside of the entire church, among the crowds of men and women and all those praying; and they could not find the entrance by which they had come in.²⁷ And so it happened that, while they were wandering about by mistake, and were going around and around, they arrived at where his wife Theodora was praying to God, bringing her husband with them. When she saw her slaves wandering about with her husband in this way, she at first turned away from his gaze, thinking that he could see with open eyes. But thereafter, having dispatched (her own) slave-boy, she began to ask why his slave-boys were wandering all around the church with her husband. They said in reply: 'When our lord and master wished insolently to observe what was not permitted to him to observe, and to listen to secret things, not only was he struck blind, but was also made deaf. When this happened, he also ordered us to put him outside the church; but it was not granted to us to remove him from the church in any way.' When this had been reported to Theodora by the slave-boy, she threw herself down in prayer, and began with tears to seek from God that her husband, together with the boys who were carrying him, would be able to get out. And turning to the boys who were carrying him, she said: 'Go now, and lead your lord and master back to his home.'²⁸ I shall not leave off the prayer which I began until I have finished; but, after making an offering to the Lord during the celebration of mass, I will follow you.' And when the slave-boys departed, giving him their hand, and had gone out, they led their lord and master back home; and then they returned to their mistress, announcing that her husband remained blind and deaf. Then Theodora poured out more abundant prayers to God, that His divine mercy would assist her husband. After holy mass and the oblation had been completed, Theodora threw herself at the feet of St Clement, saying that her husband, in shamelessly participating in the mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ, had incurred blindness in both eyes, and had lost the hearing of both his ears. Then the blessed Clement, bursting into tears together with all those who were present, urged them all to join him in pouring out prayers to God, asking that He deign to restore hearing and sight to her husband.

²⁷ It is an absurd anachronism to imagine that, at the end of the first century AD, Christians could assemble to say mass in a basilica so large that there was difficulty in finding the entrance; the author apparently has in mind the huge basilica churches constructed by Constantine (St Peter's on the Vatican Hill, St Paul's on the Via Ostiense, or St John on the Lateran), or one of the ambulatory basilicas such as S. Sebastiano (see no. III, p. 92 with n. 9).

²⁸ On the location of the *domus* of Sisinnius and Theodora, see G. De Spirito, 'Domus: Sisinnius', *LTUR* II, p. 181, who reports the opinion of Franchi de' Cavalieri ('La leggenda di S. Clemente', p. 19) that the house in question was in the near vicinity of S. Clemente; but he also raises the possibility that it may be identical with the so-called *basilica Theodoraë*, which was probably located on the *Campus Lateranus*: see G. De Spirito, 'Basilica Theodoraë', *LTUR* I, pp. 188–9.

3. After praying, Clement went trustingly with the woman Theodora to her husband, and found him with his eyes wide open but unable to see anything, and not able to hear any word or sound. When everyone present raised a great uproar, and Sisinnius failed to hear it, Clement prayed to the Lord, saying: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave the keys of the kingdom of Heaven to Your apostle Peter, my master, and said to him, that what he would open would remain open, and what he would close would remain closed:²⁹ command that the ears and eyes of this man be opened, because You said, "Whatsoever you seek as believers, you shall receive";³⁰ and this faithful promise remains forever and ever.' And when they all said 'Amen' in reply, his eyes and his ears were opened. And seeing Clement standing next to his wife, he was frantic and began to wonder what could be (going on); and thinking³¹ that he had been deceived by magic spells, he began to instruct his servants to seize Clement the bishop. For he said that he [Clement] had induced the blindness by magic spells so that he could make an approach to his wife. As for those who were commanded to tie up Clement: it seemed to them that they had tied him and were dragging him off; but in fact they were tying up some stone pillars lying there, and they now dragged them outside, now dragged them from outside back inside. It also seemed to Sisinnius himself that they were dragging away St Clement in shackles. St Clement said to him: 'The hardness of your heart has been turned to stone; and since you think that stones are gods, it is fitting that you should be dragging stones away.' But he [Sisinnius] said in jubilation, as if he himself were dragging him away: 'I shall have you killed as an example to all enchanters.' Then the blessed Clement, saying a prayer and blessing his wife, departed, leaving her with these instructions, that she should not cease from prayer until the Lord had deigned to visit her husband. Suddenly that evening a venerable white-haired man appeared to Theodora as she was praying and weeping, saying to her:³² 'Sisinnius will be healed through you, so that what my brother, the apostle Paul said, will be fulfilled: 'The unbelieving husband will be sanctified through his wife'.³³ When he had said this he disappeared from her sight; whence there can be no doubt that it was the blessed apostle Peter who had appeared to her.

²⁹ Cf. Apoc. 3: 7 ('qui aperit et nemo cludit et cludit et nemo aperit').

³⁰ Matt. 21: 22 ('et omnia quaecumque petieritis in oratione credentes accipietis').

³¹ Reading *existimans* for the editors' *extimans* (and, later in the same chapter, *existimas* for the editors' *extimas*). The same error occurs in the following chapter (V.4), where again I understand *existimabam* for the editors' *extimabam*.

³² The appearance of St Peter in the vision of Theodora recalls, and may have been modelled on, the vision related in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV.7), where an elder, dressed in white garments, appears to Pope Urban, bearing in his hands a book in gold lettering, in which are written words from Eph. 4: 4–6.

³³ I Cor. 7: 14.

4. And then Sisinnius suddenly called Theodora to him, and said to her: 'I beg you to beseech your Lord, that He not be angered with me. Driven by jealousy I went after you into the church; and when I wished to see what was going on, and to hear what was being said, I lost my sight and hearing. Now, therefore, since the presence of Clement has made me regain my sight and hearing, ask him to come to me, and make me know the truth. For it certainly seemed to me and my slave-boys that they had bound Clement with their leather thongs and were dragging him away; (in fact), by tying up stones and pillars, they are known to have dragged *them* away.' Then Theodora went to Bishop Clement and reported to him everything which she had seen and which had been reported to her by her husband. The blessed Clement, coming to Sisinnius, was received by him with great respect; Clement taught him everything which is known to pertain to the catholic faith; and Sisinnius became a believer, and was strengthened, and he began to fall at the knees of Clement and to say: 'I give thanks to the true Almighty God, Who blinded me in order that I should see, and took away my hearing so that I could hear this truth, which in my ignorance I was mocking. And what I thought to be false was true, and what I thought to be true was false. I thought that darkness was light, and light was darkness. But my senses were cleansed of the filth of idols. Truly I realize that demons deceive men, so that those who do not believe in Christ the Lord are themselves dominated by deaf and mute stones, just as they dominated me hitherto.' With Sisinnius saying these and similar things, there was great rejoicing; and, having given his name,³⁴ he was baptized the following Easter. Those who were baptized with him from his own household, men together with women and children of either sex, were reckoned to number four hundred and twenty-three.³⁵ Through this same Sisinnius many illustrious senators (*illustres*)³⁶ and friends of King³⁷ Nerva were converted to Christ. Then Tarquinius, the count of public finances (*comes sacrorum*),³⁸ seeing this innumerable multitude believing in Christ, driven by envy of the Christian name,

³⁴ 'Having given his name' (*dato nomine*). The giving of one's name—*nomenclatio*—followed the *interrogatio* (the 'baptismal questions') and was the essential preliminary to baptism; see Augustine, *Serm.* cxxxii. 1: 'Pascha est, da nomen ad baptismum' (*PL* XXXVI, col. 735); and cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.10, 11), as well as discussion by Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 242.

³⁵ The phenomenon of papal baptisms in domestic *domus* is discussed by Sessa, 'Domestic Conversions'; for the *passio* of Pope Clement, see p. 113.

³⁶ The *virii illustres* represented the highest rank of the senatorial order; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9.

³⁷ On the Romans' reluctance to use the word *rex* to describe their emperors, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

³⁸ The *comes sacrorum* (correctly *comes sacrarum largitionum*) was the senior financial minister of the imperial consistory, who was responsible for the gold and silver mines and mints throughout the empire, and for the payment of cash *stipendia* to the army and civil service; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 369–70 and 427–38, and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 28–32. It is because he is in charge of public finances that this Tarquinius is able to distribute monies to the populace in order to stir up sedition.

called to him the protectors of the various regions (*patronos*);³⁹ and having given them money, asked that they stir up an insurrection against the Christian name. At that time, when Mamertinus was administering the urban prefecture,⁴⁰ an insurrection did arise among the Roman populace with regard to the name of Bishop Clement; and they got together among themselves, saying: 'What has he done by way of evil? Or what did he do to you that was not good? Any sick person who could visit him was cured; whoever came to him in sadness departed in happiness. He never harmed anyone; he was beneficial to everyone.' But others, puffed up with the spirit of the devil, said: 'In doing these things with magic spells he voided the worship of our gods: he says that Jupiter is not the lord; Hercules, our leader, he says is an impure spirit; he reminds us that Venus, a holy goddess, is a whore; he blasphemes Minerva, a holy goddess, and similarly accuses Diana, and Mercury, and Saturn, and Mars: he also blasphemes all divinities. Let him either sacrifice to our gods, or perish'.

5. Then Mamertinus, the urban prefect, not wishing to put up with the insurrection of the people,⁴¹ ordered the blessed Clement the bishop of Rome to be brought to him. When he interviewed him in private, he started to say to him: 'The whole Roman multitude attests that you are born of a noble family, but they do not tolerate you making the mistake by which they say that you worship some Christ, and allege that you perform divine services against the (rites of) our temples. Therefore this superfluous superstition is to be abandoned, and the excellent gods are to be worshipped by you, so you may escape (punishment).' St Clement the bishop said: 'I would wish that the wisdom of your Highness would listen to reason, and would not charge me with the tumult of the ignorant (masses), but with reason. For if many dogs bark at us, and bite us with their teeth, can we not remove them from us, because we are rational men, and they are irrational barking dogs?⁴² Insurrection always arises from the ignorant: it reveals that it holds to nothing certain or true. Whence an occasion for silence should be sought, in which a rational man may begin to argue on behalf of his salvation, and to explain that he has found the true God, to Whom he entrusts his faith with true reason.' As Clement was

³⁹ The magistrates responsible for the fourteen civil regions of Rome were technically called *curatores* (Jones, *LRE*, p. 694), not *patroni*; but cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian (III.73, p. 129, with n. 86), where the *curator* of the region of the Naumachia is called *patronus*. It is possible that the terminology in the present *passio* was influenced by that of the *passio* of St Sebastian; cf. Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'La leggenda di S. Clemente', p. 17.

⁴⁰ No urban prefect named Mamertinus at this time is recorded by Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 116–17.

⁴¹ Cf. the *passio* of St Agnes ('the deputy . . . not being able to withstand the people's uproar': XVII.12, p. 359), a parallel pointed out by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 83, n. 183.

⁴² Cf. the *passio* of St Sebastian: 'If we were to arrive in the midst of barking dogs, and they began in wild fury to attack us with their bites, could they remove from us the fact that we are rational human beings, given that they are dogs, and are both irrational and insane?' (III.46, p. 118), a parallel pointed out by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 92, n. 115.

saying these and many similar things, the urban prefect began to get furious with those who had stirred up the insurrection, and having sent a message to Nerva and likewise to Trajan the emperor,⁴³ he said that this Clement was being accused by the seditious outcry of the ignorant populace, since he himself could find no grounds in their accusation.

6. Then the emperor Trajan sent a rescript,⁴⁴ as follows: 'Trajan the Caesar to Mamertinus the prefect of the city of Rome. Clement the bishop, whom the populace of Rome complains should be accused of the crime of sacrilege, is to be persuaded either to sacrifice to the gods, or else undergo exile⁴⁵ across the Black Sea in a deserted place which lies next to the city of Cherson.'⁴⁶ When Mamertinus the urban prefect had read this, he began to argue that Clement ought not to seek voluntary exile, but, in order to continue living in safety, should offer sacrifices to the gods. But the blessed Clement the bishop tries to lead the mind of the judge (*iudex*) himself to belief in Christ, since he had revealed that he sought rather than feared it.⁴⁷ The Lord bestowed so much grace on Clement the bishop that the prefect was weeping, and saying: 'May your God, Whom you worship with a pure heart, may He Himself assist you in the banishment of exile.' And the prefect chose for the blessed Clement a ship loaded with all life's necessities. The ship was filled with both clergy and people; for many religious men had followed the bishop. When they arrived at the place of exile, they found there two thousand Christians, condemned to hewing rocks in the quarries. On seeing St Clement, the Roman bishop, they all burst out weeping and moaning in unison; when St Clement realized that

⁴³ If this is not pure invention, the reference must be to the period after October 97 when Nerva, who was an old man, had adopted Trajan as his successor, but before the death of Nerva himself, on 28 January 98.

⁴⁴ For the meaning and application of the technical term *rescriptum*, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 471–3, and Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*, pp. 556–85. The most famous rescripts concerning the trial of Christians were those sent by Trajan to Pliny the Younger, who, as governor of Bithynia, had consulted Trajan about what to do about the Christians in his province; see *inter alia permulta* Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary*, pp. 691–712. One suspects that the author has some, perhaps vague, knowledge of these famous rescripts by Trajan; but the parallel is not exact.

⁴⁵ It is a historically accurate supposition that, during the principate of Trajan, a high-ranking Roman citizen—recall that Clement is conceived as being related to the family of Domitian—would undergo capital punishment in the form of deportation (*deportatio*), with loss of all his property, rather than execution: see Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 111–22, and Introduction, p. 26. What is less likely is that the exile in question would be to a place far outside the boundaries of the Roman empire.

⁴⁶ For the location of the city of 'Cherson' (correctly *Chersonesos*) in Taurike Chersonesos, see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 23 (G4). There is valuable discussion of the topography of the site of Chersonesos by Jastrzebowska, 'Il culto di S. Clemente', pp. 132–7.

⁴⁷ The narrative is somewhat loose here: insofar as he is the urban prefect, Mamertinus has judicial authority and can act as judge (*iudex*) in criminal trials; but there has been no mention of a trial (*cognitio*) in this case.

they had been exiled for the name of God, he said: 'The Lord did not send me undeservedly to you, but rather led me here to (share) your crown, so that, having become a participant in your suffering, I would also be of some consolation.' And when he had expressed many words of consolation and indulgence, he learned from them that they had been carrying water on their shoulders (a distance of) 6 miles.

7. Then St Clement said: 'Let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may perhaps open up the watercourse of a fountain for His confessors here; and He Who struck the rock in the desert of Sinai, and waters flowed in abundance, may He bestow flowing water on us, so that we may rejoice in His bounty.'⁴⁸ And when, having completed his prayer, he looks all around him, he sees a lamb standing there which, with its right foot extended, was as it were indicating the place to St Clement.⁴⁹ Then St Clement, understanding it to be the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom he alone could see, and Whom no one else except him could see, went to the place and said: 'In the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, dig in this place.' But when they were all engaged in digging with their hoes in the general area, and had not managed to reach the place where the lamb was standing, St Clement, picking up a light little hoe and striking under the feet of the lamb, opened up a spring graced with flowing water, which, pouring out with its own impetus, created a small river. Then to all the rejoicing people St Clement made this response: 'The stream of the river makes the city of God joyful.'⁵⁰ The entire region assembled at the report (of this event), and all of them were converted to the Lord Jesus Christ through the teaching of St Clement, such that on one day five hundred or more souls were baptized in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and, having been confirmed in their faith, departed as Christians. Throughout the entire region, within the space of a single year, seventy-five churches were established by believers, and all (pagan) temples were destroyed, and all idols smashed. But after three years, at the insistence of the pagans, a hostile report was dispatched to the emperor Trajan, in which they said that an innumerable throng of Christians had sprung up there through the agency of Clement; and a commander (*dux*) named Aufidianus was sent, who was to afflict the many crowds of Christians with various punishments.⁵¹ And when Aufidianus saw

⁴⁸ Moses striking the rock in the desert of Sinai: Ex. 17: 6.

⁴⁹ Several commentators have suggested that the author had in mind here an image of the Lamb of God in a mosaic: Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'La leggenda di S. Clemente', pp. 31-2; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 106; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 92.

⁵⁰ Ps. 45: 5.

⁵¹ Aufidianus' title (*dux*) implies that he is the commander of a Roman field army; but it is odd that he should have been commanded to execute Clement and the other Christians in territory lying outside the bounds of the Roman empire. Although from the first century AD onwards the Romans had garrisoned Chersonesus in order to protect the Greek colonies in that part of the Black Sea, and had built a line of forts stretching from Tanais on the river Don to the Taman peninsula, Taurike Chersonesus was in no sense a Roman province; see T. Talbot Rice,

all these people rejoicing to approach martyrdom, he gave up on the multitudes and compelled Bishop Clement alone to sacrifice. And when he saw him so thoroughly attached to the Lord, that he could not be moved, he said to his men: 'Let him be taken to the sea, and have an anchor tied round his neck, and let him be thrown into the midst of the sea, so that these Christian people cannot worship him as a god.' And when this had been done, the entire multitude of Christians began to stand on the shore and weep, and Cornelius and Phoebus, Clement's disciples, said to the weeping (throngs): 'Listen, brothers: let us all pray in harmony, so that the Lord will reveal to us the place where he [Clement] keeps watch.'⁵² As the people were praying, the sea receded some three miles from the shore.⁵³ And the people advanced on the dry seabed,⁵⁴ and they found a marble dwelling-place prepared by God in the shape of a temple, and they found within it the body of St Clement the bishop, the disciple of Peter, placed in a stone coffin. Thereafter it was revealed to his disciples that they could not take his body away from there; it was also revealed to them that every year on the anniversary of his death the sea would recede, and for seven days would provide a dry path for people coming (to his coffin). The Lord causes this to happen in praise of His name up to the present day. After this had happened all the people in the vicinity believed in Christ: no pagan, no Jew, and indeed no heretic, was to be found there. Every year, on his anniversary, many benefits accrue through the prayers of St Clement: the blind receive their sight, demons are expelled, and all sick persons who can manage to get there are healed.⁵⁵ And the peace of God reigns there,

'The Scytho-Sarmatian Tribes of South-Eastern Europe', in *The Roman Empire and its Neighbours*, ed. F. Millar (London, 1967), pp. 281–93, at 289–90. What is envisaged here, perhaps, is a military expedition commanded by Aufidianus and sent out from one of the Roman garrisons.

⁵² The Latin is slightly opaque here ('Omnes oremus unanimiter ut ostendat nobis Dominus martyris sui excubias'), where *excubiae* apparently refers to the place from which Clement keeps watch over his flock. For *excubiae* used to refer to a place ('locus ad excubandum paratus', 'a place prepared for keeping watch'), see *TLL* V/2, cols. 1287–8.

⁵³ This is a miracle indeed: there is no tide to speak of in the Black Sea, as Delehayé pointed out (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 112, n. 2). See also J.-C. Cheynet, 'De saintes reliques sous la mer: le pape Clément à Cherson', in *Sous la mer. La sixième continent. Actes du colloque international tenu à l'Institut catholique de Paris (8–10 déc. 1999)*, ed. C. Buchet (Paris, 2001), pp. 49–56.

⁵⁴ The description of the dry seabed recalls the biblical account of Moses leading the Israelites across the dry seabed of the Red Sea, when the waters have miraculously receded (Ex. 14: 21–31); for another allusion to Moses, see n. 48.

⁵⁵ On evidence for a cult of Pope Clement in Chersonesos, see Jastrzebowska, 'Il culto di S. Clemente', pp. 127–37, who points out that no evidence for Christianity has been found in this area dating from earlier than c.400, and, of the few Byzantine churches in the Crimea, none are dedicated to St Clement. She concludes: '... è evidente che la presenza di s. Clemente in persona a Chersoneso sotto Traiano non potrà essere mai dimostrata dall'archeologia' (pp. 131–2). On archaeological evidence for Christianity in Chersonesos, see also *DACL* II/2, cols. 2640–7 [H. Leclercq].

and God is joyously praised and Christ, the Son of the Living God, is adored there, Who reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. God's venerable saint, Clement the bishop of the city of Rome, suffered martyrdom in the city of Cherson⁵⁶ on 23 November.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ All editors (Mombritius, Narbey, and Fàbrega Grau) here print *in Cersona ciuitate Lyciae*. But this statement is nonsense: there is no city Cherson in the Roman province of *Lycia* (now in southwest Turkey): see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 65 (B-D 4–5).

⁵⁷ See the entry for 23 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, the death of St Clement, pope and martyr' (Appendix III, p. 657), where what is meant is that Clement's feast day was celebrated at Rome, not that he was martyred there.

VI

SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus (*Passio Vetus*)

450 × 500; relevant to the cemetery of Pontianus (Via Portuense); the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia); the basilica and cemetery of St Laurence (Via Tiburtina); and the cemetery of Hippolytus (Via Tiburtina)

The earliest surviving *passio* of St Laurence—a brief work known as the *passio vetus*—describes the gruesome execution by cremation of one of the best-known Roman martyrs, as well as other martyrs with whom he was associated.¹ The author of this work, in attempting to create an ‘epic *passio*’ on the model of those of Anastasia (II), Sebastian (III), and Caecilia (IV), but on a much smaller scale, linked together stories of the martyrdoms of Pope Sixtus II (257–8), Laurence his archdeacon, and Hippolytus who buried the remains of St Laurence before being arrested himself and executed; the narrative also describes the martyrdom of two Persian Christians named Abdon and Sennes, who were brought to Rome by the emperor Decius and put to death by gladiators as part of a spectacle in the (Flavian) amphitheatre. On the face of it, the only connection between Abdon and Sennes and the others is that their martyrdom took place during the same general persecution (which the author of the *passio vetus* mistakenly assigns to the principate of Decius (249–51), rather than to that of Valerian (253–60)).

The narrative of the *passio vetus* is as follows. After a brief sentence of explanation about the importance of recording stories about the martyrs (c. 1), we are told that Pope Sixtus (II), a philosopher who had come to Rome from Athens, heard that the emperor Decius was about to come to Rome; fearing

¹ Listed *BHL* 7811. For discussion of this text, see Verrando, ‘Alla base e intorno alla più antica *passio*’, pp. 145–87; *idem*, ‘*Passio SS. Xysti, Laurenti et Yppoliti*. La trasmissione manoscritta delle varie recensioni della cosiddetta *Passio vetus*’; and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 96–108. This *passio vetus* later served as the basis for a much longer recension treating the same martyrs, with the addition of several others, discussed and translated in this volume as no. XVI; much of the published bibliography on SS. Laurence and Hippolytus pertains to this later reworking, rather than to the original *passio vetus*, the importance of which was only brought to light by Verrando in the 1990s.

the worst, Sixtus summoned Laurence his archdeacon, and urged him to dispose of all church property and give the proceeds to the poor, so that it could not be confiscated by the emperor (c. 2). So Decius came to Rome, bringing with him two Persian Christians named Abdon and Sennes, his intention being to throw them to the beasts as part of public games he was mounting in the amphitheatre; when the beasts refused to touch them, they were executed by gladiators and their bodies were removed by Christians and buried in the cemetery of Pontianus (c. 3). Then Decius ordered Sixtus to be brought before him, and after brief discussion about the pagan gods, Sixtus was taken out to the Via Appia and decapitated; the Christians took his body and buried it in the cemetery of Callistus (c. 4). On the same day, Decius commanded Laurence to be brought before him and demanded that he hand over the treasures of the Church; Laurence, who was placed in the custody of a military commander named Hippolytus, began to assemble all the poor of Rome; on seeing the miracles being performed by Laurence, Hippolytus asked to be made a Christian (c. 5). The next day, Laurence came back to Decius with the crowds of poor Christians, and informed Decius that these were the 'treasures' of the Church; whereupon Decius consigned him to Valerian the urban prefect, with orders that he was either to sacrifice or to be executed (c. 6). At the resulting tribunal, Valerian, after ascertaining that Laurence would not sacrifice, ordered him to be roasted alive on a grate; Hippolytus removed his body and buried it in a crypt, the location of which is not stated (c. 7). Three days later Hippolytus was arrested, and was killed by being tied to wild horses set loose in a thicket of thistles; his body was removed by Christians and buried in a crypt near the 'Praetorian Field' (c. 8). A week later, Decius mounted another public spectacle; when he and Valerian entered the arena in a chariot, they both died simultaneously (c. 9).

All these martyrdoms are known from early sources. That of Pope Sixtus II is mentioned in a letter of Cyprian, who was himself martyred during the persecution of Valerian on 14 September 258.² The fact that they are all recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 (see Appendix I, pp. 634–6)—Abdon and Sennes on 30 July, 'in the cemetery of Pontianus, which is (located) *ad Ursum pileatum*'; Pope Sixtus II on 6 August, 'in the cemetery of Callistus'; Laurence on 10 August, 'on the Via Tiburtina'; and Hippolytus on 13 August, also 'on the Via Tiburtina'—provides the explanation for the sequence of events as described by the hagiographer (first Abdon and Sennes at the end of July, then Sixtus II on the sixth and Laurence on the tenth of August, and then Hippolytus three days later). Pope Sixtus II, Laurence, and Hippolytus are commemorated by epigrams composed by Pope Damasus which were engraved on tablets at their various tombs (see Appendix II (f), (m), and (n)).

² See n. 13.

Furthermore, Bishop Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) mentioned the martyrdom of St Laurence in his treatise *De officiis ministrorum* [CPL 144],³ and devoted one of his iambic dimeter hymns to St Laurence as well.⁴ And in the years around 400 the Spanish poet Prudentius lived in Rome, where he was able to visit the tombs of both Laurence and Hippolytus, and to describe their martyrdoms in two of the hymns in his *Liber peristephanon* [CPL 1443].⁵ In sum, there is little doubt that the saints commemorated in the *passio vetus* were authentic Roman martyrs. And because of their importance, and hence their widespread cult, they have attracted an enormous amount of scholarly attention. In what follows I treat the individual martyrdoms separately.

SS. *Abdon and Sennes*.⁶ According to the present *passio*, Abdon and Sennes were devout Christians from Persia who were charged with the *nomen Christianum* and brought back from Persia by the emperor Decius (who was apparently on campaign there) in order that they could be executed by exposure to beasts as part of public games (*munera*) mounted by Decius in the Flavian amphitheatre; when the beasts offered themselves submissively to Abdon and Sennes, the two Christians were duly executed by gladiators, after which they were buried by fellow Christians in the cemetery of Pontianus, at the second mile of the Via Portuense (c. 3).⁷ This narrative is pure fiction (Decius did not campaign in Persia, and élite gladiators were not used for executing condemned criminals). But whether or not they were martyred under Decius, or under a later emperor, there is no doubt that by the mid-fourth century Abdon and Sennes were recognized as Roman martyrs: their burial in the cemetery of Pontianus is recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354, as we have seen. During the later fourth century, the crypt in which they were buried was decorated with a metrical inscription by Pope Damasus and a fresco depicting both martyrs;⁸ recent excavations have also identified

³ *De officiis ministrorum* i. 41: 'Hic Laurentium sanctum ad hoc nullus urgebat, nisi amor devotionis; tamen ipse post triduum, cum illuso tyranno, impositus super craticulam exureretur: "Assum est", inquit, "versa et manduca". Ita animi virtute vincebat ignis naturam' (PL XVI, col. 92).

⁴ ICL 943; Ambrogio: *Inni*, ed. M. Simonetti (Florence, 1988), pp. 70–3 (inc. 'Apostolorum supparem').

⁵ *Liber peristephanon* ii [Laurence] and xi [Hippolytus] (CCSL CXXVI, pp. 257–77 and 370–8 respectively); see discussion by Palmer, *Prudentius*, pp. 243–5 [Laurence] and 248–50 [Hippolytus].

⁶ See BSS I, cols. 50–3 [F. Caraffa].

⁷ On the cemetery of Pontianus *ad Ursum pileatum*, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 151–4; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 190–1; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9; and M. Ricciardi, 'Pontiani coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 213–19, and, for the name 'ursus pileatus', S. Serra, 'Ursus pileatus', *LTUR* V, pp. 96–7.

⁸ For the crypt, see *DACL* I/1, cols. 42–5 [P. Allard]; Styger, *Märtyrergriüfte* I, pp. 277–80; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 229–31; for a tiny fragment of an inscription from the cemetery of Pontianus, perhaps relating to SS. Abdon and Sennes, see Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*,

what was probably a baptistery in these catacombs.⁹ Then or later a basilica was built above ground on the site of their burial;¹⁰ this church is mentioned in all the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries (see Appendix IV, pp. 662–6), and in the late eighth century it was rebuilt by Pope Hadrian I (772–95).¹¹

*Pope Sixtus II.*¹² The martyrdom of Pope Sixtus is treated in c. 4 of the present *passio vetus*. Sixtus was pope, the second of that name, for a brief period of less than a year, from 257 until he was executed, during the persecution of Valerian (253–60), on 6 August 258. The news of his martyrdom spread quickly and within a few days Bishop Cyprian of Carthage had learned of it from some of his clerics returning from Rome; in a letter to his colleague Successus he wrote, ‘You should know that Sixtus was executed in a cemetery on 6 August, and four deacons with him.’¹³ Cyprian did not name the four deacons; but we know from the *Liber pontificalis* that their names were Ianuarius, Magnus, Vincent, and Stephen.¹⁴ Nor did Cyprian name the cemetery in which Sixtus and his deacons were apprehended and killed; but, again, we know from the *Depositio martyrum* that the cemetery in question was that of Callistus: ‘[6 August]: Pope Sixtus II, in the cemetery of Callistus’ (Appendix I, p. 635). (Before the sixth or seventh century this cemetery was known by the name of Sixtus, its most famous martyr.) The tomb of Sixtus was located in the famous ‘Papal Crypt’;¹⁵ it was subsequently embellished by Pope Damasus, who composed two epigrams to commemorate his distinguished predecessor: one on the pope himself (see Appendix II (f)), the other on his

pp. 96–7 (no. 5) and Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, p. 90; for the fresco, see Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*, p. 147, no. 6 [illustrated in Wilpert, *Roma sotterranea* II, pl. 258].

⁹ As Testini pointed out (*Archeologia cristiana*, p. 190 with n. 1), this is the unique instance of a baptistery located in a catacomb, a fact which has inevitably given rise to doubt and discussion. See V. Flocchi Nicolai, ‘Considerazioni sulla funzione del cosiddetto battistero di Ponziano sulla Via Portuense’, in *Il Lazio tra antichità e medioevo. Studi in memoria di Jean Coste*, ed. Z. Mari, M. T. Petrarà, and M. Sperandio (Rome, 1999), pp. 323–32, and M. Ricciardi, ‘Nuove ricerche sul battistero nella catacomba di Ponziano a Roma’, in *L’edificio battesimale in Italia. Atti dell’VIII Congresso nazionale di archeologia cristiana*, 2 vols. (Bordighera, 2001), II, pp. 957–74.

¹⁰ See P. M. Barbini, ‘SS. Abdon et Sennes, basilica’, *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 9–10, and Ricciardi, ‘Gli edifici di culto del sopraterra’.

¹¹ See Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 165.

¹² See *DACL* XV/1, cols. 1501–15 [M. Combet-Farnoux]; *BSS* XI, cols. 1256–62 [S. Carletti], and *EP* I, pp. 286–91 [F. Scorza Barcellona].

¹³ Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxx. 1. 4: ‘Xistum autem in cimiterio animadversum sciatis VIII id. Aug. die et cum eo diacones quattuor’ (*CCSL* III C, p. 627). Successus was bishop of Abbir Germanicana in Africa; he is also mentioned in Cyprian, *Epp.* lxxvii and lxx. He, too, was martyred in 258 during the Valerianic persecution.

¹⁴ *Liber pontificalis*, ed. Mommsen, p. 34; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 155; trans. Davis, p. 10. In addition to these four deacons, the *Liber pontificalis* also names Felicissimus and Agapitus; but since these two martyrs were buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus, it is apparent that they were not martyred with Sixtus (see discussion by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 146–7). By the same token, Sixtus’ archdeacon, Laurence, was not present when Sixtus was martyred, but was martyred four days later on the Via Tiburtina.

¹⁵ On the famous ‘Papal Crypt’, see no. IV (p. 141, n. 11).

companions (the four deacons) and the other popes buried and commemorated in the 'Papal Crypt' (see Appendix II (e)). From these poems of Damasus we learn that, during the persecution, Sixtus was surprised by soldiers in the cemetery itself, and died while attempting to protect his flock.

*St Laurence.*¹⁶ Of the sequence of martyrs commemorated in the *passio vetus*, St Laurence is certainly the most famous (cc. 5–7). The hagiographer narrates two events in his martyrdom which have become legendary: that, on being requested by the emperor to hand over the treasures of the church, Laurence presented to the emperor a crowd of Christian poor, insisting that these were the church's veritable treasures;¹⁷ and that he was executed by being roasted alive on a grill.¹⁸ The earliest record of St Laurence's martyrdom is the entry against 10 August in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354: 'Laurence, on the Via Tiburtina' (Appendix I, p. 635); but he was subsequently commemorated by Pope Damasus with a brief metrical inscription (Appendix II (m), p. 645) which was evidently displayed at his tomb on the Via Tiburtina, the principal focus of his cult (see below). But his cult spread quickly, first to other churches in Rome,¹⁹ and subsequently elsewhere in Italy and beyond,²⁰ as is clear from the fact that St Ambrose composed a hymn for St Laurence, in which he described the episodes of the church's treasures and the grill,²¹ and Prudentius included a poem on St Laurence in his *Liber peristephanon* (no. ii) which was obviously indebted to the hymn of Ambrose, and which likewise featured these two episodes.²² By AD 400, then, stories about St Laurence were

¹⁶ On St Laurence, see *DACL* VIII/2, cols. 1917–61 [H. Leclercq] and *BSS* VIII, cols. 108–21 [S. Carletti].

¹⁷ Franchi de' Cavalieri, ('Intorno ad alcune reminiscenze classiche', p. 134), suggested as a possible inspiration for this episode a passage in Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (iv. 4, *praef.*), describing how Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, on being shown the jewellery of a Campanian matron, pointed to her own sons and said, 'These are my jewels' (*haec... ornamenta sunt mea*). The story of the 'treasures' of the Church is also told by Prudentius, *Liber peristephanon* ii. 117–312.

¹⁸ See Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'San Lorenzo e il supplizio', pp. 383–99; and cf. Courcelle, 'Le gril de saint Laurent'. The most famous feature of the cremation scene is that St Laurence reportedly cried out something like, 'I'm now cooked; turn me over and eat.' These legendary words do not figure in the present *passio vetus*, but were incorporated in the later, expanded version of the martyrdom (see XVI.28, p. 342, and Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'Assum est, versa et manduca', pp. 63–82).

¹⁹ Early Roman churches dedicated to St Laurence include S. Lorenzo in Lucina and S. Lorenzo in Damaso: see Krautheimer, *BCBR* II, pp. 145–51 [S. Lorenzo in Damaso], 152–8 [S. Lorenzo in Fonte], 159–84 [S. Lorenzo in Lucina], 185 [S. Lorenzo in Panisperna], and 186–90 [S. Lorenzo in Selcis]. See also Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 280–97, who lists some thirty-five Roman churches, of various dates, dedicated to St Laurence. See Blair-Dixon, 'Damasus and the Fiction of Unity'.

²⁰ See H. Grisar, 'Zum ältesten Kultus' and Nauroy, 'Le martyr de Laurent'.

²¹ Ambrogio: *Inni*, ed. Simonetti, pp. 70–2, esp. stanzas 6 ('Egena cogit agmina / inopesque monstrans praedicat / Hi sunt opes ecclesiae!') and 8 ('Fugit perustus carnifex / suisque cedit ignibus; / "Versate me", martyr vocat / "vorate, si coctum est", iubet').

²² *Liber peristephanon* ii. 137–312 (the treasures of the church; cf. n. 17), 341–408 (the cremation scene, ending with the words, clearly indebted to the lines of Ambrose quoted in the previous note, 'coctum est, devora / et experimentum cape / sit crudum an assum suavius').

circulating in Rome and beyond; but the cult of the saint had begun at an earlier period, probably during the reign of Constantine. As we know from the *Depositio martyrum*, Laurence was buried on the Via Tiburtina, in the vicinity of the present church of S. Lorenzo fuori le mura. The site was imperial property, known as the *Ager Veranus* (probably named from Lucius Verus, the brother of Marcus Aurelius), and Constantine constructed here an ambulatory basilica—as he had done on other imperial sites, such as the *Basilica apostolorum* (S. Sebastiano) on the Via Appia—dedicated to St Laurence,²³ as we learn from the *Liber pontificalis*:

Then the emperor Constantine built a basilica to the martyr St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina at the Ager Veranus, above the crypt of the catacomb; to reach the body of the martyr St Laurence he built steps for going up and down. In that place he built an apse and decorated it with purple marble, and above the burial place he sealed it with silver, and decorated it with railings of finest silver, weighing 1,000 lb.²⁴

The staircase which led down to the crypt and tomb of the martyr was presumably like that at S. Agnese, another ambulatory basilica constructed by Constantine on imperial property, but it has not been identified through excavation.²⁵ In any case, this tomb was subsequently embellished by Pope Damasus, who contributed a metrical inscription in the martyr's honour, as we have seen. At the end of the sixth century, in the time of Pope Pelagius (579–90), a second church was built directly over the tomb of St Laurence, to the north of Constantine's ambulatory basilica; and it is this sixth-century church which forms the nave of the present church of S. Lorenzo.²⁶ Thereafter the Constantinian basilica fell out of use, and is known only by excavation;²⁷

²³ On the Constantinian ambulatory basilica, which was known as the *basilica maior*, see de Rossi, 'Le due basiliche di S. Lorenzo', and, more recently, Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 1–144, esp. the reconstruction at pp. 116–23 and pls. II–IV and fig. 121; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 75–8; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 87–9; Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 102–4; S. Serra, 'S. Laurenti basilica, balneum, praetorium, monasterium, hospitium, bibliothecae', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 203–11; Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 91–3; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 93–5.

²⁴ Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, pp. 22–3.

²⁵ On the crypt which was carved out of the tufa around the tomb of St Laurence, so as to form what is called a *nichia quadrata*, and which probably dates from the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 338–54; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte* I, pp. 173–82, and more recently S. Serra, 'La tomba di S. Lorenzo: una messa a punto', in *Atti del IX Congresso nazionale di archeologia cristiana (Agrigento, 20–5 novembre 2004)*, 2 vols. (Palermo, 2007), I, pp. 357–73.

²⁶ This second, sixth-century church is called by Krautheimer the 'East Basilica'; see *CBCR* II, pp. 44–67 and 123–7.

²⁷ Because the *Liber pontificalis* states that Pope Sixtus III (432–40) built a *confessio* and basilica to St Laurence (trans. Davis, pp. 37–8), some scholars have argued that the so-called *basilica maior* is the work of Sixtus III, and dates therefore from a century later than Constantine: see Herman Geertman, 'The Builders of the *Basilica maior* in Rome', in *Festoen opgedragen aan A. N. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta*, ed. J. S. Boersma (Groningen, 1976), pp. 277–95, and *idem*,

but it will have been the principal shrine of St Laurence at the time the present *passio vetus* was composed, probably during the later fifth century (see below).

St Hippolytus.²⁸ The burial of the martyr Hippolytus is recorded against 13 August in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354: 'Hippolytus, on the Via Tiburtina' (Appendix I, p. 635). The location of his burial is confirmed by two seventh-century pilgrim itineraries: the *Notitia ecclesiarum* notes under its entry for the Via Tiburtina that St Hippolytus 'rests in peace beneath the ground in a crypt' (Appendix IV (a) [§5], p. 660), and the *De locis sanctis martyrum* adds that, to the north of the Great Church of St Laurence, 'up a hill, is the basilica of St Hippolytus' (Appendix IV (b) [§9], p. 664). Archaeological excavation has enabled the identification of not only the cemetery of Hippolytus,²⁹ but also the individual crypt in which he was buried,³⁰ the basilica, however, has not yet been identified. An epigram by Damasus preserved in the *sylloge* of Saint-Riquier, fragments of which survive embedded in the medieval pavement of the Lateran, was arguably composed to embellish the crypt on the Via Tiburtina:

When the tyrant's commands were pressing, Hippolytus
the priest is said always to have remained with Novatus in schism.
At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
when, devoted to Christ, he sought the realms of the holy,
the people sought some place where they could retreat,
so that everyone could be said to follow the catholic faith.
Thus our saint, having confessed, was found worthy to be a martyr.
Damasus reports what he heard; Christ examines all things.³¹

'La Basilica Maior'. But in spite of Geertman's arguments, the form and structure of the *basilica maior*, as recovered by excavation, are identical to those of the other ambulatory basilicas known to have been built by Constantine, and a date in the early fourth century is therefore to be preferred; in the opinion of Krautheimer, the reference in the *Liber pontificalis* is not to the Constantinian *Basilica Maior*, but to the urban church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina (CBCR II, p. 9).

²⁸ See DACL VI/2, cols. 2419–83 [H. Leclercq]; BSS VII, cols. 868–75 [A. Amore]; and *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* XV, cols. 492–551 [C. Scholten].

²⁹ See Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 356–71; Bovini, *Sant'Ippolito dottore*, pp. 123–78; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 71–5; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 242–3; Bertonière, *The Cult Center*, esp. pp. 99–100; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 153–7; D. Nuzzo, 'S. Hippolyti coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 68–75; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 98–102.

³⁰ See Styger, *Martyrgrüfte*, I, pp. 185–91, and esp. Bertonière, *The Cult Center*, pp. 134–9 (with fig. 15), at pp. 135–6: 'the tomb of the martyr was some sort of grave situated in the west wall of the original burial area... [it was] probably situated in the western perimeter wall of the old cult center.' But this tomb was subsequently destroyed by later remodelling so as to create the tomb which we see today (pp. 145–65).

³¹ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 169–73 [no. 35]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 144–7; and trans. Appendix II (n), p. 645. See de Rossi, 'Elogio Damasiano', who assumed that the Damasian epigram had been intended for the crypt on the Via Tiburtina; but cf. P. Testini, 'Damaso e il santuario di S. Ippolito a Porto', in *Saecularia Damasiana*, pp. 293–303, who discovered some tiny fragments in Filocalian lettering while excavating the

Prudentius, in his *Liber peristephanon*, no. xi, describes a church (*templum*) dedicated to the martyr (lines 215–30), as well as a fresco which adorned the crypt and illustrated the martyr's death (lines 125–70); but Prudentius adds the further complicating detail that Hippolytus was killed at 'the mouth of the Tiber', that is, at Porto (xi. 39–40: 'sistitur insano rectori Christicolae tunc / ostia vexanti per Tiberina viros'),³² and it therefore seems possible that the basilica which he describes is that discovered some years ago by Pasquale Testini at Porto, rather than that on the Via Tiburtina mentioned in the seventh-century itineraries. In any event, no trace of an above-ground 'basilica of St Hippolytus' has ever been found on the Via Tiburtina.³³ Even more serious difficulties concern the identity of the martyr himself.³⁴ According to the present *passio vetus*, Hippolytus was a military commander (*dux*) who was converted to Christianity by the example of St Laurence. Basically, the figure of Hippolytus is a composite of what were originally—probably—separate personalities: the Roman martyr who was executed along with St Laurence (whether or not he was a military commander); a Church Father, the author of a substantial corpus of exegetical and anti-heretical writings in Greek, who was originally, perhaps, a priest of Alexandria;³⁵ and a schismatic Roman priest who was banished to Sardinia along with Pope Pontian in AD 235. Agostino Amore argued in several publications that the three personalities should be kept separate; but the matter is not so simple, alas. Origen claimed to have visited Rome in 212 and to have heard Hippolytus deliver a sermon in Greek in praise of the Saviour: which indicates that the Greek Church Father, whose theological orientation is thoroughly Alexandrine, spent at least some time in Rome. The implied chronology, however, is difficult: could a mature scholar who was able to deliver a sermon in AD 212 still have been alive

basilica in Porto (on which see n. 32), which suggest that Damasus' epigram was intended for the basilica in Porto, not for the crypt on the Via Tiburtina.

³² Certainly there was a cult of a saint called Hippolytus at Porto (see the entries in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* for 21, 22, and 23 August: Appendix III, p. 656), where there was a basilica in the area called the Isola Sacra. This basilica was first brought to light in excavations by Pasquale Testini beginning in 1970; see his detailed and well-illustrated excavation report, 'La basilica di S. Ippolito'. The basilica was a three-aisled nave with a semicircular apse, datable to c.400; it served as the cathedral for Porto. The (insoluble) question arises as to whether this Hippolytus of Porto is identical with the martyr of the Via Tiburtina; see Dolbeau, 'La Passion de S. Hippolyte', and Saxer, 'Note di agiografia critica'.

³³ See D. Nuzzo, 'S. Hippolyti basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 67–8; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 98–100.

³⁴ There is a huge bibliography on this subject; see Achelis, *Hippolytstudien*; Bovini, *Sant'Ippolito dottore*, pp. 3–22; BSS VII, cols. 868–75 [A. Amore]; A. Amore, 'Note su Ippolito martire', *RACr* 30 (1954), 63–97; P. Testini, 'Di alcune testimonianze relative a Ippolito' and *idem*, 'Vetera et nova su Ippolito', in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, pp. 7–22.

³⁵ See J. Quasten, *Patrology*, II. *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Westminster, MD, 1950), pp. 163–207, and (briefly), *EEC* I, pp. 383–5 [P. Nautin]. The many writings of this Hippolytus, most of them fragmentary, are listed at CPG 1870–1925 ['Hippolytus Romanus'].

to be martyred in AD 258? There are also difficulties in identifying the associate of St Laurence (and the implied date of execution on 13 August 258) with the Hippolytus who was exiled to Sardinia in 235, together with Pope Pontian;³⁶ and yet it is striking that in the *Depositio martyrum* the martyrdoms of Hippolytus and Pontian are listed together in the one entry for 13 August: 'Hippolytus, on the Via Tiburtina; and Pontian, in the cemetery of Callistus' (Appendix I, p. 635): implying, perhaps, that they were associates, perhaps even that they had been martyred together? To complicate the matter still further, Damasus, in his epigram for Hippolytus, states that he 'is said always to have remained with Novatus in schism' (see above); and Prudentius, too, associates Hippolytus with Novatus (note that both Damasus and Prudentius use the form *Novatus* for *Novatianus*, because the latter name would not scan in a hexameter):³⁷ 'Here I find Hippolytus, who as a priest once adhered to the schism of Novat(ian)us, refusing to follow our (Catholic) doctrine' (*Liber peristephanon* xi. 19–20: 'invenio Hippolytum, qui quondam scisma Novati / presbyter attigerat, nostra sequenda negans'; cf. lines 29–30). The statement by Damasus and Prudentius that Hippolytus was a follower of Novatian raises a further chronological problem: the Novatian schism³⁸ is a phenomenon of the 250s (Bishop Cyprian attacked Novatianism in many of his letters), and was not an issue in 235, when Pontian and Hippolytus were exiled to Sardinia. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that the martyred Hippolytus who was buried in a crypt (and basilica) on the Via Tiburtina was the former associate of Pope Pontian, who had died in exile in 235, and that the association of Hippolytus with Laurence is a fiction created by the author of the *passio vetus*, prompted by the proximity of Laurence's shrine to that of Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina, and the proximity of their dates of martyrdom (10 and 13 August) in the *Depositio martyrum*. In any case, the description of the martyrdom of Hippolytus—he was tied to untamed horses and then dragged through a field of thistles—is ultimately derived from the description of the death of the Greek hero Hippolytus, who was killed on a coastal road when the horses pulling his chariot were frightened by the sudden appearance of a

³⁶ *Liber pontificalis*: ed. Mommsen, p. 24; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 145; trans. Davis, p. 8: 'Then Pontian the bishop and Hippolytus the priest were carried off into exile by Alexander [i.e. Alexander Severus, emperor 222–35] to Sardinia'. The text goes on to say that Pontian was beaten to death in Sardinia, and his body was brought back to Rome by Pope Fabian and buried (in the 'Papal Crypt') in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia. Possibly Hippolytus suffered the same fate as Pontian, but was buried in a different cemetery.

³⁷ There was at this time a priest of Carthage named Novatus, who opposed the election of Bishop Cyprian (*EEC* II, p. 605); but the famous schismatic demagogue was named Novatian, not Novatus.

³⁸ On Novatian, see *EEC* II, pp. 603–4, s.v. 'Novatian' [H. J. Vogt], and *ibid.* p. 604, s.v. 'Novatianists' [R. J. De Simone]. Novatian became antipope at the time of the election of Pope Cornelius (March 251); he is principally known for his refusal to readmit to the church the *lapsi* who had abandoned Christianity during the persecution of Decius.

sea-monster, and in their panic dragged Hippolytus to death (the story is told most fully in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* xv. 497–529).³⁹ The association of Hippolytus with wild horses may simply have been prompted by his name—*hippolytus* (ἵππολυτός) means ‘dissolved/destroyed by horses’⁴⁰—but there is reason to suspect that the author of the *passio vetus* was familiar with Prudentius’ poem on Hippolytus (*Liber peristephanon* xi), from which he apparently derived the detail that the horses dragged the martyr through a field of thistles;⁴¹ alternatively, he may have seen the illustration of the martyr’s death in the crypt of Hippolytus (on the Via Tiburtina? In the basilica in Porto?), as Prudentius had done before him (xi. 125–44). But in the end, the identity of the martyr Hippolytus buried on the Via Tiburtina remains a mystery.

It is clear, in any event, that the *passio vetus* was composed by a cleric of the church of St Laurence: as Cécile Lanéry has pointed out, the author gives detailed explanations of the burial sites of SS. Abdon and Sennes, of Pope Sixtus II, and of Hippolytus, but not of St Laurence, of whose burial he states simply, ‘Hippolytus took away his body and preserved it with spices and placed it in a hidden crypt’ (c. 7), implying that the location of St Laurence’s burial was well known to his readership.⁴² Lanéry associated the composition of the *passio vetus* with the building of the *Basilica maior* by Pope Sixtus III (432–40), and hence dated it to the period 430 × 450.⁴³ But as we have seen, the arguments of Herman Geertman that the *Basilica maior* was built by Sixtus III are rejected by archaeologists and historians, who accept the assertions of the *Liber pontificalis* that the ambulatory basilica was built by Constantine. The rejection of Geertman’s dating has the implication that the pontificate of Sixtus III cannot be used to date the *passio vetus*. More recently, Alessandro Bonfiglio has made the plausible suggestion that the work is to be dated to the second half of the fifth century.⁴⁴

Text. The *passio vetus* (BHL 7811) has been printed on two occasions: once in the mid-nineteenth century by Paul de Lagarde, on the basis of a single manuscript (London, BL, Add. 11880, written at Regensburg c.830), which happens to be the earliest surviving manuscript;⁴⁵ and more recently by

³⁹ The parallel with Ovid is discussed by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, p. 207, and Franchi de’ Cavalieri, ‘Intorno ad alcune reminiscenze classiche’, p. 134.

⁴⁰ This is the point of the (unnamed) emperor’s sarcastic remark in Prudentius’ poem: ‘ergo sit “hippolytus” ... / intereat feris dilaceratus equis’, ‘Therefore let him be “hippolytus” [“destroyed by horses”]: ... let him die by being torn apart by wild horses’ (*Liber peristephanon* xi. 87–8).

⁴¹ With the statement in the *passio vetus*, c. 8 (that Decius ‘ordered that he be taken, now half alive, outside the city, and for his feet to be tied to the legs of untamed horses and for them to be released into a thicket of thistles’ (*dimitti in cardeto*)), cf. Prudentius, *Liber peristephanon* xi. 119–20 (‘scissa minutatim labefacto corpore frusta / carpit spinigeris stirpibus hirtus ager’).

⁴² ‘Hagiographie’, p. 100: ‘[St Laurence was] enseveli dans une crypte souterraine, dont la localisation n’avait nul besoin d’être précisée pour les occupants du lieu.’

⁴³ *Ibid.* pp. 102–3.

⁴⁴ Bonfiglio, *apud* Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 94.

⁴⁵ P. A. de Lagarde, *Hippolyti Romani quae feruntur omnia graece* (Leipzig, 1858), pp. XIII–XVI.

G. N. Verrando, on the basis of some seventeen manuscripts (many of them late and worthless), among which are four ninth-century manuscripts, including the aforementioned manuscript in London (Verrando's L1).⁴⁶ In spite of the wider manuscript base used by Verrando, his text is unsatisfactory, not least because he reproduced the frequently erroneous spelling and other nonsense of the medieval scribes (e.g. in c. 4, where Verrando prints *consule senectutae tuae et sacrificia diis*, and later in the same chapter, *in cemeterio caelesti*, where *senectutae* is a solecism for *senectuti* and *caelesti* a silly error for *Callisti* (p. 208)). The following translation is therefore based principally on the edition of Lagarde, with collation of that of Verrando; the chapter divisions are my own.

1. Unpretentious writing, with its modest feeling and inspiration, diminishes rather than explains the great and outstanding virtues of the martyrs; yet they [the virtues], which are recognized as outstanding on their own, lose nothing from their own distinction.

2. And so Sixtus, the bishop of Rome,⁴⁷ was born and educated in Athens; at first he was a philosopher,⁴⁸ but subsequently (became) a disciple of Christ. Hearing that Decius the emperor⁴⁹ was to come to Rome, he said: 'All our predecessors suffered various torments, so that the status of the Church should come down to us intact. For the Lord Jesus Christ Himself suffered so that He could establish it, and the apostles preserved it by their suffering. There is nothing (to be gained) by resisting and nothing by struggling: only that we either live with justice or—what is more glorious—that we even die with justice.' When he had treated these and similar matters in his discourse, he

⁴⁶ Verrando, "*Passio SS. Xysti, Laurentii et Yppoliti*", with Latin text at pp. 207–9 and *apparatus criticus* at pp. 209–11.

⁴⁷ Sixtus II (the name *Sixtus* is a Latinized form of the Greek name *Xystus*, from *ξυστός*, 'shaved' or 'trimmed with scissors') was pope for somewhat less than a year, from 257 to 258: *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 34–5; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 155; trans. Davis, pp. 10–11. His papacy was not, therefore, contemporary with the reign of Decius, who died in 251 (see n. 49); in fact Sixtus II was martyred under Valerian on 6 August 258.

⁴⁸ He is thought to have been Greek because of his name, and to have been a philosopher, because he was wrongly identified with the author of the so-called 'Sentences of Sextus'. The original Greek text [CPG 1115], which was a reworking by an anonymous Christian author of a pagan work by a Pythagorean philosopher named Sextus, was translated into Latin by Rufinus. In the preface to his translation, Rufinus erroneously attributed the work to Pope Sixtus II (ed. H. Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 9–10, with discussion at pp. 117–19; the preface is also ptd CCSL XX, pp. 257–9).

⁴⁹ Decius was emperor 249–51. There is no life of Decius in *SHA* owing to loss of text; what is known of his reign comes largely from Eusebius, Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 29 (trans. Bird, pp. 30–1), Eutropius, *Breviarium* ix. 4 (trans. Bird, p. 56), and various Greek historians, as well as from a substantial number of inscriptions and coins: see Salisbury and Mattingly, 'The Reign of Trajan Decius'. Decius was killed in battle in June 251 at *Abritus* in *Moesia Inferior* (Razgrad in modern Bulgaria). He was the instigator of the first state-sponsored persecution of Christians, on which see Introduction, pp. 8–9 with n. 15.

summoned Laurence his archdeacon, a Roman citizen, a man worthy of God, most upright in his bearing and appearance and noteworthy for his holiness, and handed over to him all the possessions of the Church, saying: 'Let these things be kept by you with conscientious care, so that the greed of the covetous king⁵⁰ cannot reach them.' Then St Laurence sold everything he had received to Christian artisans, and paid over the entire sum to the poor.

3. And so Decius, the wicked emperor, entered Rome in the company of Abdon and Sennes, citizens of Persia and thoroughly Christian, whom he [Decius] had brought with him from the East,⁵¹ shackled for the name of Christ⁵² and afflicted with various tortures; having mounted public games, he gave them [Abdon and Sennes] over to be devoured by the attacks of wild beasts. And immediately the manacles on their hands came undone; the insatiable hunger of all the beasts submitted itself to them with bended neck, so that they were thought to be sheep rather than wild animals. Then the wicked emperor Decius ordered that gladiators kill them.⁵³ When they had been killed, he ordered that their bodies be thrown outside the amphitheatre⁵⁴ and left unburied for the dogs; that night their bodies were removed by some Christians and placed in the cemetery of Pontianus on 30 July.

4. After this he [Decius] ordered that Sixtus, the bishop of the city of Rome, be brought to him, and he said to him: 'Take account of your old age and sacrifice to the gods.' The blessed Sixtus replied to him firmly, saying: 'These are not gods, but effigies devoid of voice, without hearing, sight, mobility; they are obviously ordinary stones, set up by human planning, hence they [the idols] are sculpted and streets are paved from the same block of marble, so that what you worship in appearance you tread on with your feet. This is what your gods are like, which you worship and venerate and urge us to adore with you.' Then the king in indignation ordered him to undergo capital punishment. He was beheaded outside the city walls on the Via Appia in the place called

⁵⁰ On the Romans' reluctance to use the word *rex* to describe their emperors, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

⁵¹ There is no evidence that Decius ever travelled to the East (Persia); the author has confused Decius with Valerian, who did travel to Persia, and was captured (and died) there in 260.

⁵² Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, pp. 12–13, with nn. 31–2.

⁵³ Gladiators did not execute criminals (*noxii*) at public spectacles. However, after the bodies of criminals had been mauled sufficiently by the beasts, they were dragged away to a separate place in the arena known as the *spoliarium*, where their throats were systematically cut, to make sure no one escaped by feigning death; see Coleman, 'Fatal Charades', p. 59; Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, pp. 158–9; and esp. Sassi, *Il linguaggio gladiatorio*, pp. 173–4.

⁵⁴ The amphitheatre in question is presumably the 'Flavian Amphitheatre' (now known as the Colosseum); on the execution there of SS. Abdon and Sennes, see Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', p. 220.

Clivus Martis ('Hill of Mars').⁵⁵ The Christians carried away his body and placed it in the cemetery of Callistus on 6 August.⁵⁶

5. On that same day the emperor Decius commanded the blessed Laurence to be brought into his presence, and said: 'Where are the treasures of the church, which I know to be in your keeping?' The blessed Laurence says: 'Let me be given an adjournment of two days, so that I can bring everything from all the churches.' Then Caesar ordered that he be placed in the custody of the commander (*dux*) Hippolytus.⁵⁷ He was handed over to Hippolytus, and began to assemble from all places the poor who said they believed in Christ. When Hippolytus saw this, he said to him: 'Show me the treasures of the church.' St Laurence said to him: 'If you were to give me your agreement that you would believe in Christ, I would show you inestimable treasures.' Hippolytus says: 'If you match your words with deeds, I shall do what you suggest.' Then the blessed Laurence began to make the sign of the Cross over the eyes of blind persons, and their eyes were opened. When Hippolytus saw this, he threw himself at his feet and prayed that he be found worthy to become a Christian.

6. And when he had accepted the faith of the Lord, the next day he went in to the emperor and said: 'Laurence is outside with crowds of poor people, and he says that he cannot reveal anything unless he comes inside with all of them.' Then Caesar ordered him to come in with all (the poor); when he had entered he was asked: 'Where are the treasures of the church, which you had promised to hand over today?' Laurence said: 'These (people) here are the everlasting treasures of the Church.' Then in his indignation Decius Caesar handed him over to Valerian, the urban prefect,⁵⁸ saying: 'Unless he should sacrifice to our gods today, kill him with various tortures.'

⁵⁵ The 'Hill of Mars' (*Clivus Martis*) was located at the first mile of the Via Appia (it took its name from the important temple of Mars at the same site); see Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 52 (Unità Topografica 43: *clivus Martis*); *eadem*, 'Martis clivus', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 45–7, and *eadem*, 'Luoghi del martirio di papa Sisto II'. The same place of execution is mentioned in the *passio* of Pope Cornelius (VIII.1) and that of Pope Urban (XXX.25 [16]).

⁵⁶ This statement derives from the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 635); on the cemetery of Callistus, and the famous 'Papal Crypt' where Sixtus was buried, see n. 15.

⁵⁷ The title *dux* was that given to the commander of a field army; in modern terms, a general. It is unclear what a commander would have been doing in Rome, and why a person of such exalted station would have been charged with escorting criminals, who were regarded as scum (*noxii*), whether or not they were Christians. It is likely, therefore, that the author is using the word *dux* in a non-technical sense; for such usage, frequent in Late Latin chronicles, see Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 38–40. The task carried out by Hippolytus here would more appropriately have been assigned to an official of the judiciary, such as a *cornicularius* (like Maximus in the *passio* of St Caecilia, IV.22), a *commentariensis* (like Claudius in the *passio* of St Sebastian, III.29 and 32–3), or to a simple soldier with attendant troops (like Cerealis in the *passio* of Pope Cornelius, VII.2).

⁵⁸ There is no record of an urban prefect named Valerian (cf. Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 248–50). The author of the *passio vetus* has evidently confused this urban prefect with the emperor Valerian (253–60). Bird (*Aurelius Victor: De Caesaribus*, p. 133), notes

7. Sitting in tribunal in the palace of Tiberius (*palatium Tiberianum*)⁵⁹ immediately thereafter, he [Valerian] interrogated him thus: 'By whose support do you think you are sustained, because you wish to have neither the gods nor the emperor in your favour?' Laurence says: 'Everyone who sacrifices to idols will be with them in perpetual flames.' Then he ordered him to be roasted alive on a grate in his presence.⁶⁰ When he was being roasted, he gave blessings to the Lord with a cheerful countenance, such that everyone admired his strength of mind and his perseverance. And Valerian said to him: 'Where are the fires which you have promised to our gods?' Laurence replied: 'Learn, you wretch, how great is the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. For these burning coals do not cause me pain, but are a refreshment. I rejoice utterly that I was found worthy to be made a sacrificial victim of Christ. When accused I did not deny Him. When questioned I confessed Christ. Being roasted I give thanks. For these fires of yours, with which you torture me, are temporary; they shall quickly be reduced to ash and cinders; but those days shall come, which will consume you and your emperor in eternal punishment.' And saying this he gave up the ghost. That same day Hippolytus took away his body and preserved it with spices and placed it in a hidden crypt on 10 August.⁶¹ And he spent two days there, fasting and praying.

8. When on the third day he came out so as to enter his home, before he could take any food he was arrested by soldiers and taken to the emperor. The emperor said to him: 'Have you become a sorcerer, since you are said to have taken away the body of Laurence?' St Hippolytus, whose crown of glory was already prepared for him in his honour, said fearlessly in reply to this: 'I did this not as a sorcerer but as a Christian.' When he heard this the emperor Decius was unhinged with rage and ordered his mouth to be smashed in with stones, and his clothing to be removed, and, stretched out (on the rack), for him to be raked with iron thistles.⁶² After this he ordered that he be taken, now

that Valerian was probably consul before 238, and held an important post at Rome under Decius (the post in question is not specified), before becoming commander (*dux*) of the army in Raetia.

⁵⁹ The 'palace of Tiberius' (*palatium Tiberianum*) formed part of a vast imperial residential complex, which also included the 'palace of Sallust' (see XVI.22) and the baths of Olympias (see XVI.27); this complex was located within the 'Gardens of Sallust', one of the largest imperial estates lying within the City walls; see G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Tiberii, Thyberi / Tiberianum, Tyberianum', *LTUR* IV, pp. 49–50. The 'palace of Tiberius' is not, therefore, to be identified with the *Domus Tiberiana* on the Palatine (which lies beneath the present Farnese Gardens).

⁶⁰ On Laurence and the grate, see n. 18.

⁶¹ For the crypt of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina, see n. 25.

⁶² No instrument of torture called a 'thistle' (*carduus*) is described in Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*; possibly the 'thistle' was some form of *uncus* ('hook'), a well-attested instrument with which torturers raked the flesh of criminals (*ibid.* pp. 110–12). For the 'thistle', cf. *TLL* III, col. 448, lines 31–3, s.v. 'carduus', which cites the *Passio SS. apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, c. 58, where Nero gives the command, 'et ideo cardis ferreis acceptis iubeo eos in Naumachia consumi' (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, p. 169). A thorough study of the terminology for instruments of torture is a desideratum of Latin lexicography.

half alive, outside the city, and for his feet to be tied to the legs of untamed horses and for them to be released into a thicket of thistles. When they carried him off, he gave up the ghost.⁶³ Then the Christians carried away his body and placed it in a crypt [catacomb] which is next to the 'Praetorian Field' (*Agrum Praetorianum*),⁶⁴ on 13 August.

9. After the seventh day of his martyrdom Decius mounted public games. And he was sitting in a chariot together with Valerian, the urban prefect. As they got down (from the chariot) and entered the amphitheatre, both of them breathed their last at the same moment.⁶⁵ Decius shouted out in the hour of his death: 'O Hippolytus, you take me bound like a captive.' But Valerian shouted: 'O Laurence, you have conquered me with fiery chains, and you are dragging me off.' This event was made known throughout the entire world, and all those believing in the (Christian) faith were comforted and gave thanks to the Lord, to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁶³ The execution of Hippolytus by being dragged by wild horses through a field of thistles derives (probably) from Prudentius, *Liber peristephanon* xi. 125–44; see p. 189.

⁶⁴ For the burial of St Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina, see the entry in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 635). There is no entry for *Ager Praetorianus* in *LTUR. Suburbium*, but it is presumably to be regarded as identical with the *Ager Veranus*, on which see XVI.26, with n. 79.

⁶⁵ More absurd fiction: Decius did not die in the amphitheatre in Rome; he was killed in battle with the Goths, together with his son Etruscus, at *Abritus* in Moesia Inferior (Razgrad in modern Bulgaria): see Bird, *Aurelius Victor: De Caesaribus*, p. 130, and, for the site of *Abritus*, Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 22 (D5).

VII

Pope Cornelius

450 × 500; relevant to the crypt of Cornelius adjacent to the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia)

The brief *passio* of Pope Cornelius, which describes his martyrdom under Decius (249–51) outside Rome on the Via Appia, is a work of pure fiction with no verifiable historical content.¹ It may be summarized as follows. During the principate of Decius, Pope Cornelius and his clergy were arrested and exiled to Civitavecchia (*Centum Cellae*), but because many Christians continued to seek him out in exile, he was brought back to Rome and tried by Decius and sentenced to be taken to the temple of Mars where, if he would not sacrifice, he was to be executed (c. 1). On the way to the temple, one of the soldiers escorting him told him of his paralyzed wife; Cornelius was taken to the wife, whom he cured through prayer, whereupon the entire escort of soldiers asked to be baptized (c. 2). When Decius heard of the soldiers' conversion, he ordered that they were all to be taken to the temple of Mars where, if they would not sacrifice, they were to be executed; they were all duly executed, together with Pope Cornelius, and buried by the matron Lucina in a crypt next to the cemetery of Callistus (c. 3).

Unfortunately, this piece of pious fiction served as the principal source for the entry on Pope Cornelius in the *Liber pontificalis*,² which makes any reconstruction of his career a problematic affair. The dates of his pontificate are normally given as March 251–June 253; but since the so-called 'Liberian Catalogue' states that he presided until the consulships of Gallus and his son Volusianus, that is, until AD 252,³ the implication is that he died in 252, during the principate of Trebonianus Gallus (251–3), the successor of Decius. He is not recorded as a martyr in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354; rather, he is known to have died in exile at *Centum Cellae* (the modern Civitavecchia),

¹ Listed *BHL* 1958 and *CPL* 2180; for discussion, see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2968–86 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* IV, cols. 182–4 [G. D. Gordini]; *EP* I, pp. 268–72 [M. Simonetti]; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 108–12; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 158–72.

² *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 28–31; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 150–1; trans. Davis, pp. 9–10.

³ *MGH*, *AA* IX, p. 75: 'Cornelius: a cons. Decio IIII et Decio II [251] usque Gallo et Volusiano [252]; trans. Davis, p. 99: 'Lucius: he was bishop in the time of Gallus and Volusian [AD 252].'

probably in 252.⁴ At some point, however, his remains must have been translated to Rome, for there was a crypt housing these remains on the Via Appia, located 'adjacent to' (*iuxta*) the cemetery of Callistus (in one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries it is recorded as being 'deep (underground) in another crypt' (*longe in antro*): see Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661).⁵ The crypt was lit by a skylight, provided with a staircase, and embellished by an epigram of Damasus (see Appendix II (g), p. 642), and can still be visited today. The question of when the pope's remains were translated to Rome is complex: earlier scholars assigned the translation to the period shortly after his death; but in this case one would need to explain why his remains were not accommodated in the famous 'Papal Crypt'. The answer seems to be that, at the time of the translation, the 'Papal Crypt' was already full—the last datable deposition was that of Pope Eutychianus in 283—and it was necessary to find a separate location to house Pope Cornelius; the crypt created for this purpose must therefore date from after 283, and probably belongs to the last years of the fourth century.⁶ By that time, Cornelius was thought to have been martyred in Rome: Jerome, in his *Vita Pauli primi eremitaie* [CPL 617], composed in 379, records that 'under the persecutors Decius and Valerian, Cornelius at Rome (and) Cyprian at Carthage suffered martyrdom with their own blessed blood (c. 2).'⁷ At a later period Pope Leo I (440–61) built a basilica to Pope Cornelius on the Via Appia, near to the cemetery of Callistus,⁸ and this basilica is mentioned in the seventh-century itinerary of Malmesbury (Appendix IV (c) [§11], p. 666: 'There too is the church of St Cornelius and his body'); but it has vanished without trace.⁹ The present *passio* presumably dates from a period after the construction of the basilica, and must in any case date from

⁴ As stated in the 'Liberian Catalogue': ed. MGH, AA IX, p. 75; trans. Davis, p. 99: 'After this they [Cornelius and the confessors with him] were expelled to Centumcellae; there he fell asleep in glory.' For the date of his death (252 rather than 253), see the detailed discussion by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 158–9.

⁵ Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, II, p. 88. See de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, I, pp. 274–96; Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, p. 26 with fig. 16; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 225–32; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 97–108; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 212–13; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 154–60; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 198–9; and esp. Reekmans, *La tombe du pape Corneille*, esp. pp. 145–60 ('Le tombeau du Pape Corneille et son épitaphe'), and 161–84 ('La décoration de la crypte de Corneille').

⁶ See Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 97–8 and 102–5, and Reekmans, *La tombe du pape Corneille*, pp. 208–11, who dates the translation to the pontificate of Stephen (254–7); but cf. the trenchant and detailed discussion by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 159–72; the question is also discussed by R. Giordani, 'Sul problema dell'età della traslazione a Roma delle spoglie di papa Cornelio', *Vetera Christianorum* 42 (2005), 251–73, who, following the arguments of Amore, inclines to date the translation to the pontificate of Pope Damasus (366–84).

⁷ PL XXIII, col. 19.

⁸ LP, ed. Mommsen, p. 105; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 239; trans. Davis, p. 39: 'He [Leo I] built a basilica to the bishop and martyr St Cornelius near the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.'

⁹ See de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, I, pp. 296–7; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 170, n. 51; and L. Spera, 'Cornelii basilica, ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 156–8.

later than the composition of the *passio* of St Sebastian (III), from which it borrows various details, such as the person of the matron Lucina; it is possibly the work of a cleric of the basilica of St Cornelius and is probably to be dated to the mid- or later fifth century;¹⁰ it is certainly earlier than c.530, the completion date of the first recension of the *Liber pontificalis*, which lays the present *passio* heavily under contribution.

Text. The brief *passio* of Pope Cornelius enjoyed a surprisingly wide circulation from the ninth century onwards: *BHLms* lists some ninety-seven witnesses, and Lanéry has added a further thirty-seven.¹¹ It has been edited twice: by Mombritius (I, p. 373), on the basis of a (lost) late medieval legendary from northern Italy, and by Emmanuel Schelstrate in the late seventeenth century, on the basis of a single Italian manuscript now in the Vatican.¹² The chapter divisions in the following translation are my own.

1. In the days of the emperor Decius there arose a great persecution of Christians;¹³ and Decius ordered that wherever clerics were found they were to be punished without a hearing. At that same time Decius detained the blessed Pope Cornelius together with all his clergy, both priests and deacons; he ordered that he be deported in exile to *Centum Cellae*.¹⁴ While he was in exile, many Christians came to him and comforted him. Others sent letters of consolation to him from prison. At that same time the blessed Bishop Cyprian wrote to Cornelius about Celerinus the *lector*, since he was being held in custody; he had suffered many tortures for having confessed Christ.¹⁵ Then

¹⁰ See the arguments of Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 110–12, at 112: 'Le milieu du Ve siècle était donc tout à fait propice à la rédaction d'une Passion de Corneille, et celle-ci fut sans doute composée par—ou pour—les clercs titulaires de la nouvelle basilique.'

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 109, n. 224.

¹² E. Schelstrate, *Antiquitas ecclesiae dissertationibus, monimentis ac notis illustrata*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1692–7), I, pp. 188–90, on the basis of a single manuscript now in the Vatican, BAV, Vat. lat. 1190 (N. Italy [?Ravenna], s. xi/xii), fos. 122v–123v. The text printed by Schelstrate is virtually identical to that of Mombritius; but I have occasionally adopted a reading of Schelstrate where the syntax of Mombritius is unclear.

¹³ Decius was emperor 249–51, and the instigator of the first state-sponsored persecution of Christians; see no. VI (p. 190, n. 49), and Introduction, pp. 8–9, with n. 15.

¹⁴ *Centum Cellae* corresponds to the present-day Civitavecchia, some forty miles NW of Rome on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea; see L. Quilici, 'Il porto di Civitavecchia: L'antica Centumcellae', in *Eius Virtutis Studiosi: Classical and Postclassical Studies in Memory of F. E. Brown* (Washington, DC, 1993), pp. 63–83, and Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 42 (B4). The sentence of exile by deportation (*deportatio* rather than *relegatio*) implies that Cornelius was deprived of all financial resources while in exile.

¹⁵ No such letter has survived. The corpus of Cyprian's correspondence [CPL 50] includes one letter (*Ep.* xxi) by Celerinus (CCSL III B, pp. 111–15), five letters addressed by Cyprian to Cornelius (*Epp.* xlvii, xlviii, xlix, li, and lii: CCSL III B, pp. 226–7, 228–30, 231–7, 240–2, and 243–9 respectively), as well as one reply by Cornelius to Cyprian (*Ep.* i: CCSL III B, pp. 238–9). Cyprian's letters to Cornelius are not letters of consolation, but have to do with the heresy of Novatian, who inter alia had objected to the election of Cornelius following the execution of Pope Fabian in 250. On the suffering of the brave Celerinus, and the martyrdoms of his relatives, see T. D. Barnes, 'Three Neglected Martyrs', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 159–61.

the emperor Decius, having heard that many people were writing to him [Cornelius], ordered the blessed Cyprian also to be sent to *Centum Cellae*,¹⁶ and ordered Cornelius, the pope of Rome, to be brought before him. He ordered him to be presented to him at night at the temple of Tellus (*in Tellude*),¹⁷ in front of the temple of Pallas.¹⁸ And he challenges him, saying: 'You have determined not to fear the gods nor to entertain the orders of your superiors, nor are you terrified by my threats: <why>¹⁹ do you receive and send letters against the (laws of the) state?' The most blessed Cornelius, bishop of the city of Rome, said: 'I received letters from the crown of the Lord—not against the state, but rather in order to redeem souls.' Then Decius, filled with rage, ordered that his mouth be smashed with lead-weighted whips,²⁰ and commanded that he be led to the temple of Mars so that he could sacrifice to him;²¹ and if he would not agree to this, he was to undergo capital punishment.

2. It happened that, while he was being led out, one of the soldiers named Cerealis began to ask the blessed Pope Cornelius to go to his house, because his wife had been lying paralyzed in bed for five years. When they arrived at the

¹⁶ This is pure fiction, prompted perhaps by the fact that Cyprian and Cornelius were commemorated on the same day (14 September) in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*. There is no evidence that Cyprian was ever in exile in *Centum Cellae*.

¹⁷ On the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), see Platner–Ashby, p. 511; Richardson, pp. 378–9; F. Coarelli, 'Tellus, Aedes', *LTUR* V, pp. 24–5, and G. De Spirito, 'Tellus, Templum (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* V, pp. 25–6. The place in question was near to the Colosseum, and (probably) lay between the present Via del Colosseo and the Via dei Serpenti. It was standing in the fourth century AD, but nothing is known of its later history—the present *passio* implies that it was still in existence in the later fifth century—, and no certain remains have ever been found. The site of the tribunals and the *scrinia* of the urban prefect was the *Secretarium Tellurensis*, so the buildings of the prefecture must have lain adjacent to the temple; see Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine*, pp. 247–51, and F. Coarelli, 'Praefectura urbana', *LTUR* IV, pp. 159–60. The author of the present *passio* was no doubt aware of this, and assigned the tribunal of Decius to the same location. The temple of Tellus (*in Tellude*) figures in a number of other *passiones martyrum*: St Polychronius (XVI.8 and 11), SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.17), Pope Stephen (XXVII.12), SS. Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX.11), and SS. Calogerus and Parthenius (XXXIII.3).

¹⁸ The temple of Pallas (*templum Palladis*): Pallas in Greek corresponds to Minerva in Latin. There was a temple of Minerva in the forum of Nerva (Platner–Ashby, pp. 227–9), whence this forum was called the *Palladium forum* by Martial (*Epigr.* i. 2. 8); but this forum was too far distant from the temple of Tellus (and the *secretarium* of the urban prefecture) to be in question here: see Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', p. 235, and De Spirito, 'Tellus, Templum (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* V, p. 26, who notes that many scholars have doubted the existence of this *templum Palladis*, notably D. Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (Rome, 1997), pp. 151–8.

¹⁹ Reading *ut <quid> contra rem publicam* for *Mombritius' ut contra rem publicam*.

²⁰ On 'lead-weighted whips' (*plumbatae*), see Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 89–90.

²¹ On the 'Hill of Mars' (*Clivus Martis*), located at the first mile of the Via Appia (it took its name from the important temple of Mars at the same site), see no. VI (p. 192 and n. 55), where the temple to Mars on the 'Hill of Mars' is mentioned as a place of execution, and whence the author of the present *passio* probably derived it.

Arcus stellae near to where she was lying,²² all his soldiers asked him (to attend to her). And he entered into the house of Cerealis with two priests and one cleric (in minor orders). The blessed Pope Cornelius uttered this prayer, saying: 'O Lord God, Creator of all things visible and invisible, Who deigned to come (down) to us sinners so that You could save us: please raise up this shattered woman, your servant, and bestow on her Your mercy, just as you bestowed sight on the man born blind²³ in order that he acknowledge Your glory.' And, holding Sallustia by the hand, he raised her up, saying: 'In the name of Christ the Nazarene, arise and stand on your feet—but I don't say this on my own authority, but on that of my Lord Jesus Christ, "Who made heaven and earth (and) sea and all things which are in them",²⁴ and Who lives forever and ever.' And all those who were present replied 'Amen'. And immediately Sallustia raised herself up, shouting out and saying, 'Baptize me in Christ, I beseech you.' And she who had been confined to her bed filled a pitcher with water and brought it to him. On receiving the water, Cornelius blessed her. That same hour all the soldiers threw themselves at his feet, shouting out and saying, 'Holy father, redeem our souls, so that we may together receive the purification of holy baptism.' In reply the blessed Cornelius said to them: 'If you believe in your hearts, all your sins will be abolished.' All the soldiers replied together in one voice and said to him: 'We wish with all our heart to die happily with you, rather than to live unhappily, because we now seek what is true, (namely) the living and holy God. For in our ignorance we adored empty, deaf, and dumb idols. But (as for you): purify our souls.' And he ordered all of them to bend their knees and to pray with tears; and thus he baptized all of them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and on their behalf he offered the sacrifice of praise. And they all participated in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The emperor Decius heard that twenty-one soldiers had been baptized in the house of Cerealis. He immediately sent out and arrested them, together with the blessed Pope Cornelius; and he ordered that they be taken to the temple of Mars and sacrifice to him; if they did not consent to this, they were all to be executed together with him. When they were led there, they all said in a clear voice: 'Glory to you, our Lord God on high.' And coming outside the walls of the Appian gate, in front of the temple of Mars, they all spat on it, saying: 'May all the gods of the demons perish, together with Decius.' On that

²² *Arcus stellae* is a corruption of *Arcus Stillans*, that is, the arch of the Aqua Marcia which crossed the Via Appia at the Porta Capena: see Platner-Ashby, pp. 94–5; Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, p. 155; Richardson, p. 29; and F. Coarelli, 'Arcus Stillans', *LTUR* I, p. 107; it got its epithet *stillans* from the fact that it dripped water onto the Via Appia; cf. Martial, *Epigr.* iii. 47. 1: 'Capena grandi porta qua pluit gutta'. Through scribal corruption *arcus stillans* came to be represented here (and in other *passiones*) as *arcus stellae*: see G. De Spirito, 'Arcus Stellae', *LTUR* I, pp. 106–7.

²³ Christ and the man born blind (*caeco nato*): John 9: 1–21.

²⁴ Acts 4: 24.

same day twenty-one people of either sex were decapitated, together with the blessed Pope Cornelius, but also Cerealis with his wife Sallustia.²⁵ That same night some clerics and the blessed Lucina with her household came and took away the bodies of the holy martyrs,²⁶ which they buried in her field in a crypt next to the cemetery of Callistus,²⁷ where their prayers flourish to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

²⁵ Interestingly, de Rossi discovered an inscription in the crypt of Pope Cornelius, carved into the stucco, which read: 'Sanctus Cerealis et Salustia cum XXI' (*Roma sotterranea*, I, pp. 279–80, with pl. IV.4); and cf. Delehay, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, p. 286. It is not clear whether the inscription derives from the present *passio*, or whether the author of the *passio*, in commemorating Pope Cornelius, was familiar with the inscription in the pope's crypt.

²⁶ A devout matron named Lucina recovers and buries the bodies of executed martyrs in several other Roman *passiones*, notably the *Passio S. Sebastiani* (III.88, with n. 103), which is probably the source of her appearance here in the *passio* of Pope Cornelius, as well as those of Processus and Martinianus (XIX.8), and Pope Marcellus (XX.21–2); see Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', and Cooper, 'The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop: the Matron Lucina and the Politics of Martyr Cult in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Rome', pp. 311–16.

²⁷ 'in a crypt next to the cemetery of Callistus' (*in crypta iuxta cimiterium Calisti*): on the location, see n. 5, and A. Ferrua, 'Iuxta coemeterium Callisti', *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia*, 3rd ser.: *Rendiconti* 20 (1943–4), 109–15.

VIII

SS. Nereus and Achilleus and Companions

450 × 500; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of Domitilla (Via Ardeatina); and to the *titulus*-church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (Regio XII: Piscina Publica)

The present *passio* is a lengthy ‘epic *passio*’ involving a substantial number of saints reportedly martyred under Domitian (81–96 AD) and his successors Nerva and Trajan.¹ The links of these various saints with the principal characters, SS. Nereus and Achilleus, often seem tenuous at best. The work consists of a lengthy introduction followed by the individual martyrdoms which, because they are frequently transmitted separately in manuscript, are listed separately in *BHL* as follows:

Introduction (*BHL* 6058): cc. 1–11

Rescriptum Marcelli (*BHL* 6059): cc. 12–14

Passio SS. Petronillae et Feliculae (*BHL* 6061): cc. 15–16

Passio S. Nicomedis (*BHL* 6062): c. 17

Passio SS. Nerei et Achillei (*BHL* 6063): c. 18

Passio SS. Eutychetis, Victorini et Maronis (*BHL* 6064): cc. 19–20

Passio S. Domitillae (*BHL* 6066): cc. 21–5

In spite of the fact that it bears the names of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (whose martyrdom is reported only briefly), the principal focus of this conglomerate *passio* is on the Roman matron Domitilla, as may be seen from the following summary.

After a preliminary chapter in which the author states the urgent need for providing literary accounts of martyrdoms (c. 1), he introduces the noble virgin Domitilla, said to be the niece of the emperor Domitian, and her two eunuch chamberlains, Nereus and Achilleus (c. 2). When Nereus and Achilleus observed their mistress being dressed in purple and gold, and being

¹ Listed *CPL* 2214 (and the various items in *BHL*, listed separately above); for discussion, see Schaefer, ‘Die Akten der heiligen Nereus und Achilleus’; Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 190–1 and 228–9; *DACL* XII/1, cols. 1111–23 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* IX, cols. 813–20 [U. M. Fasola]; and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 113–25.

adorned with jewels, they delivered, speaking alternately, a long harangue on the delights of virginity and the perils of married life and childbirth (cc. 3–8). Domitilla was convinced by these arguments, and took the step of taking the veil and being formally consecrated a virgin by Pope Clement (c. 9). Her fiancé, Aurelian, was understandably enraged by this development, and, with the emperor's agreement, had her banished to Ponza with her two eunuch chamberlains; but on Ponza they found two disciples of Simon Magus preaching against the Christianity of St Peter, whereupon Nereus and Achilleus decided to write to one Marcellus, a Christian and the son of the urban prefect Marcus, to seek advice on the relative merits of St Peter and Simon (c. 10). The letter of Nereus and Achilleus occupies the following chapter (c. 11). The reply of Marcellus is quoted at length (cc. 12–17); in it, he related an earlier confrontation between St Peter and Simon, during which Peter was able to resuscitate the corpse of a dead boy, a miracle which caused Simon to flee in disgrace (cc. 12–13). Simon subsequently associated himself with the emperor Nero, and at this point St Paul arrived in Rome, his arrival having been anticipated by St Peter in a vision (c. 14). Meanwhile, St Peter managed to heal his own daughter, Petronilla, from a paralysis; because of her beauty she was sought in marriage by Count Flaccus, but Petronilla asked for a delay, and, after being given the viaticum by the priest Nicomedes, she died (c. 15). Flaccus quickly transferred his attentions to Felicula, the foster-sister of Petronilla; but when Felicula refused to sacrifice to the gods, she was murdered (c. 16). Nicomedes retrieved her body from the sewer where it had been dumped, and buried it on the Via Ardeatina, which caused Nicomedes to be arrested and executed; his body was thrown into the Tiber, but was retrieved by one of his clerics and buried on the Via Nomentana (c. 17). At this point the letter of Marcellus ends, and a letter addressed to Marcellus by three Christians named Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro—who introduce themselves as Domitilla's chamberlains—explains that Nereus and Achilleus have been executed through the influence of Aurelian, and that Domitilla has been removed from Ponza to a prison in Terracina in Campania; the bodies of Nereus and Achilleus were, however, removed and buried in a crypt belonging to Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina (c. 18). But because Domitilla was even fonder of Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro than she had been of Nereus and Achilleus, Aurelian sent them far away: Eutyches to an estate at the sixteenth mile of the Via Nomentana, Victorinus to one at the sixtieth and Maro to one at the hundred-and-thirtieth miles of the Via Salaria (c. 19). Because they kept preaching Christianity in these places, Aurelian arranged to have them executed; they were all venerated as martyrs in the places where they had been sent (c. 20). Meanwhile, Domitilla had two foster-sisters named Euphrosyne and Theodora; Aurelian sent two young men of senatorial rank named Sulpicius and Servilianus to Campania to marry them (c. 21). Theodora had a younger brother named Herod, who was blind, and Euphrosyne's nurse had

a mute daughter; Domitilla was able to cure both of them by her prayers, whereupon Theodora and Euphrosyne converted to Christianity (c. 22). Aurelian then arrived with Sulpicius and Servilianus, intending that there would be a triple wedding; he locked Domitilla in her bedroom, and as part of the celebrations of the imminent wedding danced non-stop for two days and nights, after which he collapsed and died (c. 23). The brother of Aurelian, named Luxurius, handed Sulpicius and Servilianus to the urban prefect, who ordered them to be executed by decapitation; they were buried at the second mile of the Via Latina (c. 24). Finally, Luxurius ordered Domitilla, Theodora, and Euphrosyne to be locked in a room and burned alive; their bodies were retrieved and buried by St Caesarius (c. 25).

There is perhaps a vestige of historical fact in the part of the story which concerns Domitilla.² We know from Eusebius that in the fifteenth year of Domitian's principate (i.e. AD 95) Flavia Domitilla, the niece of one T. Flavius Clemens (consul in the same year), was exiled with others to the island of Ponza because of her Christianity (*HE* iii. 18. 4); and Suetonius reports that this same Flavius Clemens was put to death by Domitian in the year of his consulship (*Vita Domitiani* xv. 1). There are many problems with this information;³ the essential point is the link between these Flavians, and Domitilla in particular, and the cemetery/catacomb on the Via Ardeatina, which was founded on an estate belonging to Domitilla.⁴ It was in this cemetery that in the course of excavations during the years 1817–23 an inscription was found stating that certain named persons were buried there *ex indulgentia Flaviae Domitillae* (*CIL* VI, no. 16246). The inscription has subsequently been lost; but it was on the basis of this inscription that de Rossi, in 1865, claimed to have discovered, in these same catacombs, the family tomb or hypogeum of the Flavians.⁵ More recent scholarship has confirmed de Rossi's identification,⁶ and this region of the catacombs of Domitilla is known (and may be visited

² See *DACL* IV/2, cols. 1401–4 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'Domitille (Flavie)'; *BSS* V, cols. 877–9 [A. Carletti]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 310–12, as well as the articles by Pergola and Pouderon cited in the following note.

³ See discussion by P. Pergola, 'La condamnation des Flaviens "chrétiens" sous Domitien: persécution religieuse ou répression à caractère politique', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 90 (1978), 407–23; Eck, 'Das Eindringen des Christentums', pp. 392–3; and B. Pouderon, 'L'énigme Flavius Clemens, consul et martyr sous Domitien ou: le personnage historique et ses doubles littéraires', *Ktema* 26 (2001), 307–19. A further complication is that Pope Clement (whose martyrdom is described in no. V, above) was associated with this same Flavius Clemens: see Pouderon, 'Clément de Rome'.

⁴ See P. Pergola, 'Il "praedium Domitillae" sulla Via Ardeatina', *RACr* 55 (1979), 313–35, and (briefly) *idem*, 'Domitillae praedium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, p. 207.

⁵ G. B. de Rossi, 'Del cristianesimo nella famiglia dei Flavi Augusti e delle nuove scoperte nel cimitero di Domitilla', *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* (1865), 17–24.

⁶ L. Pani Ermini, 'L'ipogeo detto dei Flavi in Domitilla', *RACr* 45 (1969), 119–73, and 48 (1972), 235–69. As she demonstrates, this region is one of the oldest in the cemetery, dating from before the mid-second century; it was being used for Christian burial by the mid-third.

today) as the 'hypogeum of the Flavians'. The catacombs of Domitilla constitute one of the largest and most famous cemeteries in suburban Rome.⁷

It was near to the 'hypogeum of the Flavians' that the martyrs SS. Nereus and Achilleus were buried, as is stated unambiguously in the present *passio*: Auspicius, the disciple of Nereus and Achilleus, took their bodies by boat from Ponza (they had been with Domitilla during her exile there) and 'buried them in a tufa catacomb on the estate of Domitilla, on the Via Ardeatina, a mile and a half from the city walls' (c. 18). At first the martyrs were placed next to each other in individual tombs; but the site of their tombs was subsequently enlarged to create a hypogean basilica, the upper part of which (the clerestory) stood above ground, while the lower part incorporated the original tombs of the martyrs, over which were built an altar and ciborium. The altar was embellished with four columns (two of them incorporating carvings of Nereus and Achilleus) and an inscription in Filocalian lettering by Damasus (see Appendix II (c), pp. 639–40). The basilica itself, which consisted of a three-aisled nave with a semicircular apse, was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake, perhaps in 897, and was subsequently buried under topsoil; it only re-emerged into the light in 1873, when de Rossi, approaching the site from above ground, identified the basilica, and by 1875 had succeeded in removing all the earth which had infilled the basilica. During the course of excavations, one of the columns containing the carving of St Achilleus was found,⁸ and two fragments of Damasus' commemorative epigram (which was otherwise known only from medieval *syllogae* and which was apparently engraved on the ciborium) were found, enabling a hypothetical reconstruction of the shrine.⁹ The building was roofed over in 1878; the surviving columns were set up in 1912 (and the missing ones replaced), with the result that the basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus can be visited today in something resembling its original form. The date at which the original basilica was constructed has been the subject of debate: Krautheimer inclined to think that it dated from the

⁷ The most authoritative and accessible account of this cemetery is Fasola, *The Catacombs of Domitilla*; see also P. Pergola, 'Domitillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 203–7, as well as *DACL* IV/2, cols. 1404–42 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'Domitille (cimetière de)'; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 135–78; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 129–34; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 201–6, with figs. 52–5; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 211–16; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 200–1.

⁸ The carving, which shows Achilleus at the moment of his decapitation wearing a loose tunic, has above it the inscription ACILLEVS (see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 154, fig. 35, and Fasola, *The Catacombs of Domitilla*, fig. 8). This spelling of his name may suggest that he was an emancipated slave of the powerful family of the Acilii (e.g. Acilius Glabrio, consul in 91, on whom see 'Glabrione Acilio' in *BSS* VII, cols. 55–6 [G.D. Gordini]); but there were also consuls of this name in 124, 152, and 186. See M. Dondin-Payre, *Exercice du pouvoir et continuité gentile. Les Acilii Glabriones du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. au Ve siècle ap.J.-C.* (Rome, 1993), esp. pp. 30–2 ('Le gentile Acilius'). If a martyr named Acileus did belong to the family of Acilii, the later spelling of his name was presumably influenced by that of the well-known Homeric hero.

⁹ See the reconstruction in Fasola, *The Catacombs of Domitilla*, p. 22, fig. 3.

pontificate of John I (523–6),¹⁰ but more recently it has been argued that the basilica was built by Damasus (hence before 384).¹¹

From a fragmentary inscription found during excavation of the basilica, it is evident that the cemetery of Domitilla was administered by priests of the *titulus Fasciolae*,¹² a small *titulus*-church located near the baths of Caracalla in Rome.¹³ At the Roman synod of 499, three priests represented the *titulus*-church of Fasciola; a century later, in 595, the same church bore a dedication to SS. Nereus and Achilleus: a clear indication of the growing importance of the cult of these two saints. The present church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (on the Viale delle Terme di Caracalla) dates from the ninth century, from the pontificate of Leo III (795–816), perhaps from 814; but it is widely assumed that this Carolingian church replaced the earlier *titulus Fasciolae*, even though no certain traces of the original church have ever been found.¹⁴ It is in any case likely that the present *passio* was composed by a cleric of the *titulus Fasciolae* responsible for the administration of the basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus in the cemetery of Domitilla, as Lanéry has suggested.¹⁵ But in addition to the two principal saints, the *passio* incorporates narratives of the martyrdoms of many other saints—not least Domitilla herself—which are best treated individually.

SS. *Nereus and Achilleus*. As we have seen, there was a basilica, partly underground, built over the tombs of the martyrs Nereus and Achilleus in the catacombs of Domitilla. An altar and ciborium (and conceivably the entire basilica) were constructed over the tombs by Pope Damasus, who supplied an epigram to commemorate the martyrs, the first lines of which state: 'They had

¹⁰ Basing his opinion on a statement in the life of Pope John I in the *Liber pontificalis*: ed. Mommsen, p. 137; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 276; trans. Davis, p. 52: 'Pope John rebuilt the cemetery of the martyrs Saints Nereus and Achilleus on the Via Ardeatina.'

¹¹ On the basilica, see Fasola, *The Catacombs of Domitilla*, pp. 35–49, and Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 128–34. For discussion of the dating, see Krautheimer, *ibid.* p. 133; Tolotti, 'Contributo alla datazione della basilica dei SS. Nereo e Achilleo'; and Pergola, '*Nereus et Achilleus martyres*', pp. 203–24, who argues that the basilica was originally built by Damasus, a view endorsed more recently by N. Zimmermann, 'Rilettura di pitture a Domitilla: tracce del santuario damasiano dei SS. Nereo e Achilleo?', in *Scavi e scoperte recenti*, ed. Brandenburg and Guidobaldi, pp. 189–212.

¹² Found by de Rossi; see 'Continuazione delle scoperte nel cimitero di Domitilla', *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 2nd ser. 6 (1875), 45–77, at 49–50; the inscription reads: 'Pascentius lector de Fasciola) ... cons. dn. Honorio' (= *ICUR* I, p. 124 [no. 262]), and is to be dated to AD 377; see also Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 158–9.

¹³ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 90–4; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiteriali di Roma antica', pp. 254–5; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 388–9; and M. Cecchelli, 'Fasciola, Titulus', *LTUR* II, pp. 241–2.

¹⁴ On the (present) Carolingian church, see the full study by Guerrieri, *La chiesa dei SS. Nereo e Achilleo*, as well as Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 135–52; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 136–7; G. De Spirito, 'SS. Nereus et Achilleus, titulus', *LTUR* III, pp. 342–4; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, p. 145.

¹⁵ 'Hagiographie', p. 119.

enrolled in the military, and they performed / this savage duty, observing together the commands of the tyrant' (Appendix II (c), p. 640). Nereus and Achilleus, in other words, were soldiers. Damasus' poem does not identify the 'tyrant' under whose orders they were executed.¹⁶ In the present *passio*, however, Nereus and Achilleus are not soldiers but are two eunuchs who are described as the chamberlains (*eunuchi cubicularii*) of Flavia Domitilla. From the time of Diocletian onwards, it had become conventional to employ eunuchs (typically of Armenian origin) as chamberlains in the imperial household, possibly because their asexual nature made them more trustworthy guardians of imperial secrets.¹⁷ The present *passio* is apparently the first of many to portray two saints as a pair of eunuchs.¹⁸ In any event, in the *passio* Nereus and Achilleus are said to have been converted to Christianity by St Peter (c. 2), and are portrayed as haranguing Domitilla, their mistress, to preserve her virginity and to reject the marriage to Aurelian which has been arranged for her (cc. 2–8). Nereus and Achilleus then approach Pope Clement, who duly consecrates Domitilla a virgin (c. 9), whereupon Aurelian, with the collusion of the emperor Domitian, has her exiled to the island of Ponza, to which Nereus and Achilleus accompany her (c. 10). On Ponza, they find two disciples of Simon Magus impugning the reputation of St Peter. Accordingly, Nereus and Achilleus write in protest to one Marcellus, the son of an urban prefect in Rome (c. 11). The reply by Marcellus occupies cc. 12–17, and describes St Peter's earlier confrontation with Simon Magus (the account of the confrontation is taken, nearly verbatim, from the so-called 'Vercelli Acts' of St Peter, composed in Latin c.400: see n. 45), but also includes accounts of the martyrdoms of three other saints: Petronilla, supposedly St Peter's daughter; Felicula, her foster-sister; and Nicomedes the priest. The letter of Marcellus prompts a reply from Ponza by Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro (see below), who report to Marcellus that Nereus and Achilleus had been taken from Ponza to Terracina, where through the influence of Aurelian they were executed by the local governor (c. 18). As we have seen, their bodies were then taken by their disciple Auspicius from Terracina to Rome, and buried in the

¹⁶ Earlier scholars, such as de Rossi, influenced no doubt by the present *passio*, assumed that the tyrant in question was Nero; but Franchi de' Cavalieri showed that the assumption was groundless, and that a more suitable occasion for the executions of two Christian soldiers would be the onset of the 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian: 'I SS. Nereo ed Achilleo', pp. 43–55.

¹⁷ See Jones, *LRE*, pp. 851–2, as well as Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 172–96; and Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene*, esp. pp. 130–76, with discussion of eunuchs in Roman *passiones martyrum* at p. 134, n. 20 (Guyot's discussion of these texts is based on that of de Gaiffier, quoted in the following note).

¹⁸ Other examples include SS. Protus and Hyacinthus (no. IX), John and Paul (no. XVIII), and Calogerus and Parthenius (no. XXXIII); see de Gaiffier, 'Palatins et eunuques', pp. 17–46, with discussion of SS. Nereus and Achilleus at pp. 42–3, and Boulhol and Cochelin, 'La réhabilitation de l'eunuque', pp. 63–70.

catacombs of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina. They are commemorated on 12 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III, p. 653).

St Petronilla. Lying close to the hypogean basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus in the catacombs of Domitilla is a cubiculum with a lavishly decorated arcosolium depicting a deceased Roman matron named Veneranda, who is being led to heaven by a martyr named Petronilla ('PETRO / NELLA / MARTYR').¹⁹ The fresco dates from the second half of the fourth century; its inscription implies that, by that date, Petronilla was venerated as a local Roman martyr.²⁰ But it has also been suggested that she was a local Christian benefactor rather than a martyr;²¹ and this suggestion is prompted by the fact that in the same cubiculum there was formerly a sarcophagus which bore the legend 'AVRELIAE PETRONILLAE FILIAE DVLCISSIMAE'. The sarcophagus was removed to St Peter's in the time of Pope Stephen II (752–7) and subsequently lost. Although it is no longer extant, however, the inscription was recorded in 1574; the name Aurelia indicates that Petronilla was a member of the family of Flavii, who are so well represented in the catacombs of Domitilla, herself a member of that family.²² In any case, it seems clear that the proximity of the arcosolium depicting Veneranda and Petronilla (and perhaps the sarcophagus as well) is what led the author of the *passio* to include her in his epic tale; and it was perhaps simply her name which led him to reinvent her as the daughter of St Peter (c. 15). She is described in the *passio* as a paralytic who is miraculously restored to health by her apostolic father, whereupon a certain Count Flaccus seeks her hand in marriage. She requests three days' delay, during which she prays continuously in the company of her foster-sister Felicula, receives the viaticum at the hands of the priest Nicomedes, and then dies.²³

St Felicula. At this point Count Flaccus transfers his offer of marriage to Felicula; but she rejects the offer, stating that she is a virgin. She is accordingly confined with the Vestal Virgins, then tortured, and dies, with her body being thrown into the sewer (presumably the Cloaca Maxima), whence it is retrieved by Nicomedes and buried (in a cemetery) at the seventh mile of the Via

¹⁹ On the fresco, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 160–1, with fig. 38; Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*, p. 123 [no. 15]; and esp. R. Giuliani, 'Il restauro dell'arcosolio di Veneranda nelle catacombe di Domitilla sulla Via Ardeatina', *RACr* 70 (1994), 61–87, as well as Fasola, *The Catacombs of Domitilla*, pp. 41–3, with fig. 9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 201–2.

²⁰ See the extensive study by Saint-Roch, *La martire Petronilla*.

²¹ See Pergola, 'Petronella martyr', pp. 627–36.

²² For the sarcophagus, see de Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* (1865), 46–7; Achelis, *Acta SS. Nerei et Achillei*, pp. 40–1; and esp. R. Giordani, 'Aur(eliae) Petronillae filiae dulcissimae. Qualche considerazione sulla leggenda di Petronilla, presenta figlia dell'apostolo Pietro', *Studi Romani* 53 (2005), 411–30.

²³ She is commemorated on 29 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III, p. 653).

Ardeatina (c. 16). Although the general area of the cemetery can be located, no trace of it (let alone Felicula's tomb) has ever been found.²⁴ She is commemorated at various dates in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*,²⁵ but nothing is known of her beyond what is narrated here.

St Nicomedes. When it was reported to Count Flaccus that Felicula's body had been retrieved by the priest Nicomedes, he was arrested, and after refusing to sacrifice was beaten to death with lead-weighted whips. His body was thrown into the Tiber, but retrieved by the priest Justus and buried 'in his [Justus'] own little garden next to the city walls on the Via Nomentana' (c. 17).²⁶ The cemetery is mentioned in two seventh-century itineraries (Appendix IV (b) and (c), pp. 664, 665), and was seen in the seventeenth century by Antonio Bosio; at the beginning of the twentieth century it was rediscovered by Rodolfo Lanciani near the present building of the Ministry of Transport. But no trace of the crypt or tomb of a martyr Nicomedes has ever been found,²⁷ and the *passio* gives no indication of where Nicomedes was priest.²⁸ He is commemorated on 15 September in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 656).

SS. Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro. After the deaths of Nereus and Achilleus, Domitilla, still in exile on Ponza, replaced them with three new chamberlains, for whom she reportedly had even greater love than for the two eunuchs: Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro (c. 19). Aurelian, Domitilla's persistent betrothed, sought permission from the emperor Nerva for the three men to be given to him (they are slaves), whereupon he removed them from Ponza and the company of Domitilla, and sent them separately to estates in his ownership elsewhere in Italy: Eutyches to one at the sixteenth mile of the Via Nomentana; Victorinus to the sixtieth mile of the Via Salaria; and Maro to the 130th mile of the same Via Salaria. They each performed miracles of healing at their separate locations, and thereby converted many to Christianity, so on the orders of Aurelian they were all murdered (c. 20): Eutyches on the Via Nomentana, perhaps at *Eretum*; Victorinus at the sulphurous hot springs called *Aquae Cutiliae* near the ancient town of *Amiternum*, five miles from present-day

²⁴ V. Flocchi Nicolai, 'S. Feliculae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 247–8.

²⁵ See the triplicated entries in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, against 14 February, 5 June, and 13 June (see Appendix III, pp. 651, 653–4).

²⁶ P. De Santis, 'Iusti horticellum', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 108–9.

²⁷ See P. M. Barbini, 'L'area funeraria subdiale di Nicomede ed i rinvenimenti nella Villa Patrizi fuori Porta Nomentana', in *Domum tuam dilexi*, pp. 11–21, and *eadem*, 'S. Nicomedis coemeterium, ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 94–5, as well as Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 73–4.

²⁸ De Rossi drew attention to the existence of a *titulus*-church of someone named Nicomedes, mentioned in an inscription found in S. Lorenzo fuori le mura; but the identity and location of this church is completely unknown. See de Rossi, in *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* (1865), p. 50; Achelis, *Acta SS. Nerei et Achillei*, pp. 42–3; and Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 54–8.

L'Aquila at a village known today as San Vittorino; and Maro at Civitanove Marche (ancient *Cluentum vicus*) in the Piceno, where there is still a church of S. Marone.

St Domitilla. Aurelian, having eliminated all Domitilla's Christian companions, now turns his full attention to his prospective marriage: first by removing her from Ponza to Terracina, and then by sending two of her foster-sisters, Euphrosyne and Theodora, to visit her and dissuade her from her Christian resolve. In order to expedite the process, he also made arrangements for Euphrosyne and Theodora to be provided with suitable (pagan) husbands of illustrious rank, named Sulpicius and Servilianus (c. 21). But Domitilla, by performing some miraculous cures, was able to convert Euphrosyne and Theodora to Christianity (c. 22); and when the two suitors heard about this, they too were converted (c. 23). Aurelian reacted by locking Domitilla in her bedchamber, and then celebrating the forthcoming nuptials by dancing non-stop for two days; after which he collapsed and died. Because of their newly-acquired Christian belief, Sulpicius and Servilianus were summoned and tried before the urban prefect at Rome, sentenced to capital punishment, executed, and then buried by Christians in a cemetery at the second mile of the Via Latina.²⁹ Finally, the brother of the dead Aurelian, named Luxurius, locked the three remaining virgins—Domitilla, Euphrosyne, and Theodora—in a room, set fire to it, and burned them all to death (c. 24). Their remains were buried, presumably at Terracina, by a local deacon named Caesarius.³⁰

* * * * *

The above summary makes it clear how tenuous are the links between the subjects of the various martyrdoms described in the present *passio*. What unifies the work is its overarching theme: the need to preserve one's virginity and to reject marriage and procreation. The early chapters of the work (cc. 2–8) contain lengthy and vehement arguments against marriage and childbirth and in favour of virginity.³¹ These arguments presumably resonated powerfully

²⁹ On the cemetery, see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 131.

³⁰ St Caesarius of Terracina is the subject of a separate *passio* (BHL 1511–16), which forms a sort of appendix to the present text; see F. Lanzoni, 'A proposito della Passione di San Cesario di Terracina', *RACr* 1 (1924), 146–8; *idem*, *Le diocesi* I, pp. 148–50; and below, n. 91.

³¹ The bibliography on this subject is immense. For analysis of the relevant patristic texts, see J. Wilpert, *Die gottgeweihten Jungfrauen in den ersten Jahrhunderten der Kirche nach patristischen Quellen und Grabdenkmälern dargestellt* (Freiburg, 1892), and T. Camelot, *Virgines Christi. La virginité aux premiers siècles de l'Église* (Paris, 1944); and, more recently, Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 336–74; Brown, *The Body and Society*, esp. pp. 341–65 [Ambrose] and 366–86 [Jerome]; Susanna Elm, *'Virgins of God': The Making of Asceticism in late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), esp. the introductory discussion on pp. 6–18 (the book itself is principally concerned with female asceticism in Cappadocia and Egypt, not Rome); and Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, pp. 78–9 [Ambrose], 79–80 [Jerome], and esp. 116–43 (oddly, though Cooper makes frequent reference to *passiones martyrum*, she does not discuss the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, which contains the most extensive discussion of virginity to be found in these texts).

with Roman audiences—especially female audiences—during the second half of the fifth century when, to all appearances, the *passio* was composed.³²

Text. The *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus circulated widely, both whole and in parts: *BHLms* lists some 146 witnesses for one or more of the parts, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further fifty-five, making a total of some 200, of which ten date from the ninth century. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Maii* III [1680], pp. 6–13.

1. Unless the concerns of Catholics were to doze off in the dream of their own security, the wickedness of heresy could in no way invade the borders of religious devotion, pricking us with its goads to wake up. And nevertheless, in putting aside vigorous and attentive (exertion), with a certain lazy awareness and disdainful concern we neglect the sheep, whom we certainly let escape from the sheep-pen to be devoured by the bites of wolves. Whence in accordance with the concern of those orthodox believers who lived before us, I have translated from Greek into Latin³³ some of the martyrdoms which took place in our province,³⁴ supplying this example to the students of various (other) provinces, so that, just as we have done in our own (province), they may translate the martyrdoms which have taken place in theirs: so that the populace, worshipping and venerating them [the martyrs], whom they know to have suffered (death) for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, may know by what zeal in battle, carrying the triumphs of their victories, they were found worthy to proceed rejoicing and exulting to their King.

2. First of all, for the edification of all those whose desire is to please God, let us take (the example of) the noble virgin Domitilla, the niece of the

³² See Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 123–4, who points out that it is the pervasive concern with virginity which marks this *passio* as a work of the fifth century. The author was evidently familiar with epic *passiones*, such as those of Anastasia and Chrysogonus (II) and Sebastian (III); and the *passio* of St Eugenia (IX), which can be dated to the second half of the fifth century (see p. 232), seems to depend on it, as do the *passiones* of SS. Agnes and Emerentiana (XVII) and Gallicanus, John and Paul (XVIII).

³³ In spite of the author's statement that he had translated some of the following martyrdoms from Greek, there is no supporting evidence: the Greek text of the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (*BHG* 1327) is clearly a translation from the present Latin text; the apocryphal sources drawn on by the present author, such as the *Martyrium beati Petri apostoli* by pseudo-Linus (*BHL* 6655) and the so-called 'Vercelli Acts' (*Actus Petri cum Simone*: *BHL* 6656), are in Latin, not Greek; and the abundant topographical information in the text concerning Roman cemeteries implies a resident of Rome. Accordingly, the author's statement concerning his translation from Greek into Latin must be interpreted as a topos intended to lend authenticity to his account (see Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 119).

³⁴ It is not clear what is meant by the author's own province (*provincia*): does he refer to Campania, where a substantial amount of the action takes place, and where Domitilla is finally martyred and buried? Such a supposition would be in flat contradiction of the deduction made by Lanéry (above, p. 205 and n. 15) to the effect that the text was composed by a cleric of the *titulus Fasciolae*, i.e. the intra-urban church of SS. Nereus and Achilleus.

emperor Domitian.³⁵ She had the eunuchs Nereus and Achilleus as her chamberlains, men whom the most blessed and holy apostle of God, St Peter, had acquired for Christ. When they saw their mistress being adorned with jewels, and being dressed in purple garments woven with gold, they said to her: 'With what great eagerness you adorn your body, so that you may receive Aurelian, the son of a consul, a mortal man, as your fiancé! If you were to adorn yourself in your soul with such great eagerness, you could obtain as your spouse the immortal King: He would make you eternal, and would never allow there to be an end to your adornments nor to your pleasures.' Domitilla replied to them, and said: 'What love can be greater than to have a man, to bring forth his sons, through whom a most delightful posterity can be prolonged, and not to extinguish either the distinction of the family (or) the reputation of the name? Finally, how coarse it is to scorn these delights, and not to enjoy the sweetness of life itself, and not to love whatever is pleasant to the body, as if one had never been born!'

3. To this Nereus replied and said: 'You look to the delights of a single moment, and do not see the dangers which follow during the rest of the year. First, when you separate yourself from the purity with which you were born: having lost the name of virgin, you will be called a (mere) woman; and you who never allowed even your parents to exercise authority over your high station, will allow a strange man to be lord of your body, who will abuse you with a kind of base authority, so that anyone's conversation with you will not pass without the risk or danger of a quarrel: neither your neighbours, nor your nurses, nor your slaves brought up at home, will be friendly to you: your speech will entail risk, your appearance will entail risk, what you hear will entail risk, and even simply what you do will be subject to evil suspicions.' Domitilla replied and said: 'I know that my mother suffered my father's jealousy, and was exhausted by this violence over a long period of time: am I to have a similar experience?' Achilleus said: 'All husbands, before they marry their wives, project themselves as humble and extremely gentle; but later they reveal what they have hidden about themselves; and, if they were inclined to be wanton, they love slave-girls, and, scorning their wives and treating them as nothing, they defend (their actions) with an arrogant display of rage; and they punish their wives not only with words but with beatings; and when a hurtful word is spoken by a dutiful matron, he can scarcely bear it, and fists, combined with savage kicks of his feet, are inflicted on her.'

4. 'But let's say that he is neither wanton nor jealous, but rather is proven to be gentle and agreeable; let us now see what unpleasant things certainly attend

³⁵ Domitian: emperor (81–96). The wife of Vespasian, Domitian's father, was named Flavia Domitilla (Suetonius, 'Vespasian', c. 3), and the same name was borne by their daughter (*ibid.*), who was Domitian's sister. The niece of Domitian, who was married to Flavius Clemens, was also named Flavia Domitilla (Suetonius, 'Domitian', c. 17). And note that Domitian's niece Domitilla also figures in the *passio* of Pope Clement (V.2); but it is possible that she has been interpolated there as a reflex of the present *passio*.

the woman. She will carry unwillingly the weight (of the foetus) conceived in her womb; with this weight she becomes ill, swollen, pallid, scarcely able to walk on her own feet; experiencing boredom with nourishing food she delights in harmful food; sometimes the interior of her nose is inflamed with an abundance of blood, or it grows cold with an excess of mucus; or else she is either restricted by skinniness, or is hampered by her body fat; from all these causes diseases spring up in the recesses of the womb once the foetus has been conceived, as a result of which weak or crippled or lame offspring are usually born. And usually, being placed in their own home, they live apart from the normal way (of life). And not only are these feminine problems seen by the eyes of the (pregnant) women themselves, but they are exposed to the medical expertise of unknown men, such that the body of the foetus—the foetus—which often kills its mother before it is born—is customarily extracted by means of an operation. Such a foetus usually turns out deaf or mute or covered with wounds, or is even born possessed with a demon, so that it is necessary to seek an exorcist even before seeking a nurse.'

5. In reply (to Achilles) Nereus also said: 'O how blessed is sacred virginity, which is removed from all these limitations, and is loved by God and is dear to all the angels! Whoever possesses it is similar to God; whoever does not have this likeness to God, does not have it because she lost her purity and found corruption. Through penance a woman can escape its guilt, but cannot recover her purity. Alas, what great madness it is to wish to subject oneself to another person's sexual desire! Alas, what extreme thoughtlessness it is, for someone—who could have expected the reward and perpetual crown for her purity with the rejoicing and praise of men and angels—to have with a groan to seek penance for this pollution, in order that she may be able to arrive at forgiveness! For all sanctity, when it has been lost through some kind of volition or compulsion, can be recalled to its (original) state and its (original) glory through penance; virginity alone cannot be recalled at all to its (original) state. Guilt can be expelled through tears of penance; but purity, as we said, cannot be recalled in such a way that it attains to the status of its original sanctity. All things lost can be recovered; virginity alone, once lost, cannot be recovered. Nor could a woman, although she might acquire forgiveness through penance for what she has done, manage to become a virgin, when once she has lost that purity with which she was born.'

6. 'Virginity is well proven to be the friend of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For just as the person of the queen takes precedence over all matrons of high senatorial rank (*illustres*), so does virginity excel the distinction of all the virtues, such that it occupies second place after the martyrs, and is first among all other virtues. All the virtues are subservient to it; and just as her chambermaids obey the Empress (*Augusta*), so do the virtues obey virginity's commands. Faith caresses it, hope embraces it, charity kisses it; and all those (virtues) which stand in the sight of the King of Heaven—patience,

perseverance, constancy, contempt of the world, vigilance, hospitality, mercy, concern, knowledge, truth, probity, tolerance—all these virtues which have been mentioned, and others not mentioned, are obedient to it. Among the foliage of Paradise and the unfading flowers of eternal life, among the glades of the angels and the shady meadows redolent with holy fragrance—where eternal life is breathed into the nostrils, where the air itself has the strength of perfume, so that whoever breathes it into his nostrils can no longer be sad, no illness can extend its dominion over the virgin, no pain, no sadness; but she shall always be rejoicing, her soul will always be exultant and secure in the eternity of her life.’³⁶

7. To these (arguments) Achilles said: ‘These things which my brother mentions are trivial; and he takes up, as it were, a pint-measure from an immense river and holds it with the drinking-vessel, but is unable to estimate the extent of the water with his calculations: so too the future joys and delights of that life no speech is able to describe, no contemplation discover, no argument comprehend. I wish not to omit the fact that even here in this world virginity does not lose its nobility, does not fear virile audacity, is not subject to man the corrupter who pollutes the pure (woman), marks her out, destroys her purity, takes away her freedom; and he violently makes a slave to his sexual desire something made noble by God, and dear to God Himself and all His saints. Thereafter he keeps her locked up within the walls of his home as if in a private prison: he does not allow her to be greeted (by anyone), he forbids her to be seen by her parents, he shuts out from her discussion and conversation her teachers, nurses, and neighbours, as if they were enemies; nor is she allowed to speak freely with children, since he fears that through them their parents will learn of the injuries which he inflicts on his wife. And these are the false delights which he had (presented her with) as a virgin! I lie, if this never happened, and, through the agency of the holy angel of God, the patron of virginity, I were not to mention lesser evils which male arrogance is accustomed to do, for the reason that he permits her to separate from herself that with which she was born and weaned, with which she laughed and cried from her infancy: he permits her to expel from her estate that purity which she received from her Creator when she was born; and he caused hostile corruption to invade that place, when purity, which had dwelled there from the time she was born, was driven from there, and corruption is introduced, which from the time she was born had never entered. And since I have said that holy virginity has as its patron the angel of the Lord, who rebukes and scolds the woman (thus) created, let us reproduce his words of rational rebuke.’

³⁶ The text very oddly uses masculine pronouns in this sentence (*qui . . . eum*); for the sake of clarity I have used feminine pronouns in the translation, since the reference throughout is to (female) virginity.

8. 'Tell me, O man, in what way did virginity harm you, such that you cast it from you, and admit its enemy in its place? When you came out of your mother's womb, it was born with you, weaned with you, was with you always, and never departed from your company; it wept with you your tears of infancy, amidst coddling and support it was suckled with you, fed with you, given drink with you: with you it grew weary with the weariness of your body; with you it became anxious with the anxieties of your illnesses; when you lay awake it lay awake; it slept with you when you slept, it arose when you got up, it stood with you when you were standing, it sat with you when you were sitting; it got dressed when you were being dressed, it was decked out when you were being decked out, it hungered when you were hungry, it ate when you were eating, it learned its letters with you, it was taught with you by a grammarian's teaching, it was instructed with you in the orator's eloquence,³⁷ with you it was strengthened by the body of the Lord,³⁸ it became a catechumen with you, was baptized with you, was sanctified with you in the blood of Christ, came together with you to the wedding of Christ and Ecclesia, where His bridal chamber, constructed with the jewels of the virtues, daily grows more beautiful in the adornment of pure minds, from whose marriage [i.e. of Christ and Ecclesia] an innumerable multitude is born every day, to such an extent that Christ is the father of those being born, and Ecclesia is the mother; and yet the bridal chamber is not harmed, because Christ the bridegroom does not cease to be the father, and Ecclesia does not cease to be the bride. For Christ is always both bridegroom and father, Ecclesia is always the bride and mother, who does not cease to give birth, and does not cease to be an immaculate virgin. In the embrace of Christ purity is increased rather than driven away, and in Ecclesia's giving birth her virginity grows rather than decreases. Her adornments gleam with the variegated brilliance of jewels, from her mouth the honeyed eloquence of the law and the everlasting charms of virginity come forth. O blessed and holy virginity!—which, placed here on earth among sinning men, (nevertheless) enjoys the great delights which you believe you are to have in heaven among the angels! How dear you will be to the angels! How much better than these transient kingdoms, how much more beautiful than all precious gems! You have with you every moment the beautiful young man Christ, the Son of God Almighty, golden-haired with the glory of diadems, brilliant and gleaming, shining more brightly than the

³⁷ Achilles (speaking in the voice of the angel-patron of virginity) refers here to the three principal stages in a Roman education: primary education with the *paedagogus*, then secondary education with the *grammaticus*, and tertiary education with the *rhetor*; cf. S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London, 1977), pp. 165–88, 189–249, and 250–308 respectively.

³⁸ It is probable that the statement that she was *Christi corpore refecta*, should come after *tecum facta catechumena*, *tecum baptizata est*, since she would not have been permitted to take the 'body and blood' of the Lord (i.e. the Eucharist) until she had passed through the catechuminate and been baptized.

radiant light of heaven. For since the sun is known to be His servant and slave, how great must be the beauty of the Lord, given the beauty of (the sun) His servant? He will always be with you, O holy virginity: He remains with you among all the saints in eternal and spiritual delights, He rejoices to be with you always among the angels. Choose now, whom you wish: this one, Who is eternal with His eternal delights? Or a mortal man, whose delights are to perish with him?’

9. As Nereus and Achilleus were saying these things, Domitilla, a most learned virgin, said: ‘O that this knowledge of God had come to me long ago, and I never had to take on the name of bride, and I could without difficulty assume this honour of sanctity! And just as, having been baptized, I would abandon the worship of idols, so too, when I had been (properly) instructed, I would scorn this carnal intercourse. Now, however, as to how God opened your mouths in order to gain my soul: likewise I believe that He will reveal His counsel to you, so that what we desire for His love may be fulfilled through you.’ Then Nereus and Achilleus went to St Clement the bishop,³⁹ and said to him: ‘Although your entire importance derives from our Lord Jesus Christ, and you do not glory in human, but rather in divine, distinction, we know nevertheless that Clement the consul is the brother of your father; his sister Plautilla purchased us as slaves, and then, when she believed on hearing the Word of life from the lord Peter the Apostle, and was baptized, she hallowed us, together with her daughter Domitilla, in baptism.⁴⁰ That same year the apostle Peter hastened to the crown of martyrdom, and Plautilla left this earthly body.⁴¹ But when Domitilla, her daughter, was to take Aurelian, an illustrious senator (*illustrem*), as her husband, she learned from our humble selves a message which we learned from the mouth of the Apostle: that a virgin, who perseveres in her virginity for the love of the Lord, will be found

³⁹ Pope Clement is the subject of the *Passio S. Clementis* (no. V, above, pp. 165–79).

⁴⁰ The relationships of the *gens Flavii* are complex. According to reliable sources such as Suetonius and Eusebius, the emperor Vespasian (AD 69–79) was married to a woman called Flavia Domitilla (Suetonius, ‘Vita Vespasiani’, c. 3), by whom he had three children: Titus (emperor, 79–81), Domitian (emperor, 81–96), and a daughter, also named Flavia Domitilla. She in turn had a daughter, confusingly also named Flavia Domitilla, who married T. Flavius Clemens, consul in AD 95, who was murdered that year on the orders of Domitian; according to Eusebius, Flavia Domitilla was exiled to Ponza (*HE* iii. 18. 2), along with many others, for their ‘testimony to Christ’. It is presumably this Flavia Domitilla who properly is the subject of the present *passio*. However, the author’s narrative adds further confusion to these relationships. According to his account, T. Flavius Clemens had two siblings: an unnamed brother, who was the father of Pope Clement (who therefore was the nephew of T. Flavius Clemens); and a sister named Plautilla, who is said to have died in the same year as St Peter (AD 64). This Plautilla, who is a fictitious creation of our author, is said to have had a daughter, also named Domitilla, who was the owner of Nereus and Achilleus, and figures as the subject of much of the present *passio*.

⁴¹ St Peter is thought to have been executed at Rome in AD 64, probably in the persecution of Nero which followed the fire of Rome; see (*inter alia permulta*) the bracing discussion by Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 5–9.

worthy to have Christ as her husband, with Whom she will persevere in eternal delights and everlasting glory. After listening to these and things like them, she now desires to consecrate the vow of virginity by taking the veil at your hands.' Clement the bishop said to them: 'It is (now) the time, as I see it, in which both my and your and her calling in this circumstance may attain to the palm of martyrdom; but because it is the commandment of our Lord Jesus, that we do not fear those who kill the body, let us scorn the mortal man (in us), and strive to obey with all our strength the Author of eternal life.' Then St Clement, coming to Domitilla, consecrated her.⁴²

10. And because it is a lengthy business to describe in order the individual misfortunes which her fiancé Aurelian, filled with rage, inflicted on Domitilla, let us move our narrative on to the end of the story. He [Aurelian] obtained from Domitian the agreement that, if she refused to sacrifice, she would undergo exile on the island of Ponza;⁴³ he reckoned that he could torture her in exile, so that he might recall the mind of the holy virgin from her undertaking of constancy. Therefore, when she had been exiled on Ponza,⁴⁴ and Nereus and Achilleus were there with her, also exiled there were two wicked disciples of Simon (Magus): one of them was named Furius, the other Priscus. These two men were deceiving nearly the entire island with magic spells: they had caused Simon Magus to be venerated and acknowledged as the son of God, but Peter to have been his enemy without good grounds.⁴⁵ And

⁴² The reference is to the pontifical rite of the veiling (*velatio*) or consecration of a virgin; see the comprehensive study by R. Metz, *La consécration des vierges dans l'Église romaine: étude d'histoire de la liturgie* (Paris, 1954), whose important discussion may be summarized as follows. By the fourth century, there were dedicated virgins who lived in the world as well as others who lived a communal life in monasteries; both kinds could be consecrated by a bishop (but not by priests). Although the existence of a liturgical rite is known from various late fourth-century sources (notably the writings of Ambrose on virginity, and a letter of Pope Siricius (*PL* XIII, cols. 1182–4)), there is no surviving pontifical *ordo* which describes the ceremony; however, the prayers which were pronounced by the bishop during the ceremony are preserved in the early sacramentaries (Veronense and Gelasian), from which it can be concluded that the ceremony took place during mass at Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. The *Sacramentarium Veronense* preserves the liturgy used in Roman *titulus*-churches in the early seventh century (ed. L. C. Mohlberg, with L. Eizenhöfer and P. Siffrin (Rome, 1956), with the prayer of consecration, 'Ad uirgines sacras', at pp. 138–9), and the prayer preserved in the Gelasian Sacramentary was probably transcribed c.700 (Mohlberg et al., *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae*, pp. 124–5 [§§788–90]); see discussion by Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, p. 190, and Chavasse, *La liturgie de la ville de Rome*, pp. 93–4.

⁴³ According to Eusebius (*HE* iii. 18. 2), in AD 95 Domitilla was exiled to Ponza, along with many others, 'as testimony to Christ'. It is possible, but impossible to prove, that this Domitilla was the founder of the cemetery (catacombs) of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina.

⁴⁴ Although the author does not say so specifically, it is apparent that the exile of Domitilla is *relegatio* (non-capital exile) rather than *deportatio*, inasmuch as she has been allowed to take her household (including Nereus and Achilleus) with her to Ponza; on the distinction, see Introduction, p. 26.

⁴⁵ The narrative of St Peter and Simon Magus, as told here by Marcellus (cc. 12–14), is taken from the so-called 'Vercelli Acts of Peter' or *Actus Petri cum Simone* or *Actus Vercellenses* [*BHL* 6656], cc. 7–28 (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, pp. 45–103, at 53–78; trans.

when Nereus and Achilleus opposed them, and there was a substantial crowd which was defending them, Nereus and Achilleus said to the people: 'Do you know Marcellus, the son of Marcus, the urban prefect?'⁴⁶ They replied: 'Who doesn't know him?' Nereus and Achilleus say to them: 'Do you accept his testimony concerning Simon (Magus) and Peter?' They replied: 'He is very stupid, who does not believe such a person.' In replying they [Nereus and Achilleus] said: 'Preserve your well-being, and for the time it takes for him to receive our letters and write back to us, concerning the Apostle Peter as much as Simon Magus, sequester yourselves from their teaching: our letter has been written; choose one of you who will take it to him; we wish it to be read out in your presence, so that, when he replies, it will likewise be read out in your presence.' This decision satisfied everyone, and they sent off their man with the letter of saints Nereus and Achilleus.

11. The text of the letter is this: 'Nereus and Achilleus, servants of Jesus Christ, (send) eternal best wishes to Marcellus, our brother and co-disciple. We rejoice that we are exiled in a penitentiary on the island of Ponza, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; but Furius and Priscus, the disciples of Simon, who have (also) been exiled here for magic practices, diminish our joy. For they state that Simon was innocent, and that the Apostle Peter cursed him without reason. And when we had said this to everyone, so that no one would believe them, we asserted that you were a suitable and illustrious person of good faith, who could inform them in writing what his [Peter's] life was like. Because, since you have been his disciple, you will know all his accomplishments. We ask that you do not delay in writing them down, so that innocent people can be freed from their deceptions. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' Here ends the letter of Nereus and Achilleus. The reply of Marcellus now begins.

12. Marcellus, the servant of Christ, to the holy confessors Nereus and Achilleus. Having read your letter I am filled with joy: for I recognized that you were firm in faith and works, and were fighting concernedly for the truth. And

James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 310–29). The 'Vercelli Acts' are listed by M. Geerard, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti* (Turnhout, 1992), no. 190.iii; for discussion, see *The Apocryphal Acts of Peter*, ed. Bremmer, esp. pp. 148–60 (A. Hilhorst, 'The Text of the *Actus Vercellenses*') and 192–9 (G. H. Poupon, 'L'origine africaine des *Actus Vercellenses*'); and for arguments that the *Actus Petri cum Simone* were first composed in Latin, c. 400, possibly in Africa, see Baldwin, *Whose Acts of Peter?*, esp. pp. 134–93. On the confrontation between Peter and Simon Magus, see R. Von Haehling, 'Zwei Fremde in Rom: das Wunderduell des Petrus mit Simon Magus in den *acta Petri*', *Römische Quartalschrift* 98 (2003), 47–71.

⁴⁶ The character of Marcellus, son of an urban prefect named Marcus, derives from the *Martyrium beati Petri apostoli* of pseudo-Linus (BHL 6655): 'Marcello nihilominus, Marci praefecti filio, qui postquam Symonis magi pestiferam doctrinam auerterat, apostolo fideliter et utiliter in cunctis adhaeserat...' (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* I, pp. 1–22, at 4). No urban prefect named Marcus is attested at this time; see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 115–16.

because you mention that it has been put to you that Simon was innocent, I shall disclose his life in some measure, so that the whole (picture) can be known from a few (details). For when I was his disciple, and I realized that he was wicked and a child-murderer and malicious, I left him, and clung to my lord St Peter the Apostle.⁴⁷ When he (once) accused Simon of being a sorcerer, and had stirred up the Roman populace to hate him, suddenly, in the place where Simon was remonstrating with Peter, a widow passed by, taking her only son (to the grave), accompanied by a large number of people and noisy shouting and lamentation.⁴⁸ Then Peter said to the people who were believing in Simon: 'Approach the bier, and put down the dead (boy) who is being taken away; and whoever can resuscitate him, let his faith be believed as the true one.' When the people had done this, Simon said: 'Now, if I resuscitate him, will you kill Peter?' And the entire crowd replied: 'We will burn him alive.' Then Simon, having summoned all his demons, began with their ministrations to get the corpse to move. On seeing this the people began to shout out in praise of Simon and in disparagement of Peter. Then Peter, scarcely able to command silence, said to the people: 'If he is alive, let him speak, walk about, take some food, return to his house. If he is not able to do this, you should know that you have been deceived by Simon.' To this the people shouted out in unison, saying: 'If Simon has not done this, let him suffer the penalty which he himself prescribed for Peter.' Simon, pretending that he was enraged, sought to escape. But the people seized him with great disapproval, and kept him under guard. Then Peter, stretching out his hands towards heaven, said: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Who said to us Your disciples, "Go forth in my name and cast out demons, cure the sick, and raise up the dead":⁴⁹ raise up this boy, so that all the crowd may recognize that You are God, and there is no other except You, Who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.' The boy, getting up, worshipped Peter, saying: 'I saw the Lord Jesus Christ, commanding the angels and saying: "At the request of my friend Peter, let this orphan be restored to his widowed mother".' Then the entire populace shouted out in one voice: 'He is the One Whom Peter is preaching.' But Simon changed himself into a dog's likeness,⁵⁰ and began to flee. The people detained him, and when they wished to cast him into the fire,

⁴⁷ The wording ('adhaesi domino meo S. Petro apostolo') derives from the *Martyrium beati Petri apostoli*, as quoted in the previous note (*apostolo fideliter . . . adhaeserat*).

⁴⁸ The story of Peter's resuscitation of the widow's son is from the *Actus Petri cum Simone*, c. 28 (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, pp. 74–80; trans. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 327–9).

⁴⁹ Cf. Matt. 10: 8.

⁵⁰ The meaning of the Latin text (*transfiguravit se in caput caninum*) is unclear: does it mean that, in his transformed state, he had a dog's head? The sentence is not found in the 'Vercelli Acts'.

Peter placed himself in between, and freed him, saying, 'Our Master taught us that we should repay evil with good.'

13. When Simon had escaped, therefore, he came to me, and thinking that I was unaware of what had happened, stationed a huge dog,⁵¹ which could scarcely be restrained with iron chains, at the entrance, saying: 'Let us see if Peter, who is in the habit of visiting you, will be able to get in.' After an hour Peter came, and having made the sign of the Cross, released the dog and said to it: 'Go and tell Simon: "Stop using the ministrations of demons to deceive the people, for whom Christ poured out His blood".' On seeing these great miracles, I ran to Peter; and, throwing myself at his knees, I received him in my house; but I expelled Simon in disgrace. The dog, although it behaved gently to everyone else, attacked Simon alone; when it had crouched underneath him (ready to attack), Peter ran up shouting and saying: 'I command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you do not bite any part of his body.' And the dog could not get at any of his limbs, but rather tore apart his clothing with his bites, so that no part of his body remained covered. The entire populace, and especially the boys, ran after him with the dog, to the point that with a yell they drove him [Simon] like a wolf outside the walls of the city.

14. Subsequently, being unable to bear the opprobrium of this disgrace, he was nowhere to be seen for a year. Thereafter he found (someone) who could introduce him to the emperor Nero. And thus it came about that an evil man attached himself in friendship to another evil man, indeed a man worse even than him. After this the Lord appeared to the apostle Peter in a vision, saying: 'Simon and Nero, both full of demons, are plotting against you: do not fear, for I am with you, and I shall give you the comfort of my servant, the apostle Paul, who enters Rome tomorrow. Together with him, after seven months, you shall fight a battle with Simon, and after you overcome and expel him, and put him in Hell, you shall both come to me as victors.' Which is what happened. For Paul came the next day. In what sequence they met up, and had their battle with Simon after seven months, since you were there and saw this with your own eyes, I thought it superfluous to teach you what you (already) know, since St Linus wrote the full account of their martyrdom in Greek for the eastern churches.⁵²

15. As for Petronilla,⁵³ the daughter of my lord Peter the apostle—what her death was like, since you asked, I shall carefully and briefly explain. You know Petronilla well, who remained paralytic through the decision of Peter: for

⁵¹ In the 'Vercelli Acts', the narrative of the dog *precedes* that of the miraculous resuscitation of the widow's son; see *Actus Petri cum Simone*, cc. 9–12 (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, pp. 56–60; trans. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 313–16).

⁵² The pseudo-Linus *Acts of Peter* [BHL 6655]: Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, pp. 1–22; cf. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 470.

⁵³ At this point the author ceases to draw on the 'Vercelli Acts', which do not contain the narrative of Petronilla (c. 15).

I recall you being present, when several of his disciples were being refreshed in his company, and it happened that Titus⁵⁴ said to the apostle: 'Since all sick persons are healed by you, why do you allow Petronilla to go on lying there as a paralytic?' The Apostle said: 'It is arranged for her thus. But lest it be thought an impossibility for her to be released from her disability by my words, I say⁵⁵ to her: "Get up, Petronilla, and cater for us".' And immediately she got up, fully healed. When she had attended to us, he ordered her to go back to her bed. And when she began to reach perfection in her fear of God, not only was she herself saved, but she also recovered the health of many others through her prayers. And because she was extremely attractive, Flaccus the count (*comes*)⁵⁶ came to her with his soldiers, so that he could take her for his wife. Petronilla said to him: 'You have come with armed soldiers to an unarmed young girl. If you wish to have me as your wife, have some matrons and honest virgins come to me after three days, so that I can go with them to your house.' It happened that, when the space of three days had passed, the virgin [Petronilla] was occupied in fasting and prayer, having with her Felicula, her foster-sister,⁵⁷ a holy virgin perfect in the fear of God. And on the third day, St Nicomedes the priest came to her and celebrated mass.⁵⁸ The sacred virgin, as soon as she had taken the sacrament of Christ, lying back in her bed, gave up her spirit. And so it happened that the entire crowd of matrons and virgins who had been brought by Flaccus performed the funeral rites of the holy virgin.⁵⁹

16. Flaccus, changing his mind, said to Felicula: 'Choose one of two things: either become my wife or sacrifice to the gods.' The blessed Felicula replied to him: 'I shall not be your wife, because I have been hallowed for Christ; nor shall I sacrifice to the idols, because I am a Christian.' Then Flaccus handed her over to his deputy (*vicarius*),⁶⁰ and had her confined to a dark cell, without food, for seven days. The wives of the guards said to her: 'Why do you wish to die a vile death? Take this high-born man, (who is) rich, young, elegant, a

⁵⁴ There are two men called Titus in the New Testament, both of them disciples of St Paul rather than St Peter: the Titus of Acts 18: 7 and II Cor. 2:13, and the addressee of Paul's *Epistula ad Titum*.

⁵⁵ The syntax is confused here: Peter is speaking in the first person (*meis sermonibus excusari*) but the transmitted text continues in reported (third-person) speech: *ait* [he says] *ad eam*. I accordingly understand *aio* for the transmitted *ait*.

⁵⁶ The title 'Count' (*comes*) merely implies that Flaccus was a member of the imperial *consistorium*; the fact that he has a 'deputy' (*vicarius*) implies that he is either the urban prefect or the praetorian prefect (see c. 16 with n. 60). Note that the title of 'count' was first introduced by Constantine, and is entirely anachronistic in the context of the first century.

⁵⁷ Felicula is Petronilla's *collocatanea*, i.e. she was nursed at the same breast; see *TLL* III, col. 1575.

⁵⁸ On the existence of an unidentified *titulus*-church in the name of Nicomedes, see n. 28.

⁵⁹ On the burial of Petronilla in the cemetery of Domitilla, see p. 207, with nn. 19–22.

⁶⁰ The fact that Count Flaccus has a 'deputy' (*vicarius*) implies that he is either the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy (which would be a gross anachronism in a first-century context), or else urban prefect of Rome.

count, and a friend of the emperor.' On hearing this Felicula did not present any objection at all, but only this: 'I am a virgin of Christ, and besides Him I accept no one at all.' Expelled (from prison) after seven days, she was taken to the Vestal Virgins,⁶¹ and she remained there, without food, for another seven days. In no way could they bring her to receive food from their hands. After this, stretched out on the rack,⁶² she shouted out: 'Now I begin to see Christ my lover, on Whom my love is fixed.' They all said to her: 'Deny that you are a Christian, and you'll be released.' But Felicula shouted out: 'I do not deny my lover, Who for my sake was fed on gall, given vinegar to drink, was crowned with spines, and fixed to a cross.' After that her body was taken down and thrown into the sewer.⁶³

17. But St Nicomedes the priest, keeping a lookout, stealthily lifted out her body and took it by night in a two-wheeled cart to his little house at the seventh mile from Rome, on the Via Ardeatina, and buried her there, where her prayers bear fruit up until the present day.⁶⁴ It was reported to Flaccus that Nicomedes the priest had done this, and he had him arrested and brought to make a sacrifice. He [Nicomedes] said, 'I do not sacrifice, except to Almighty God Who reigns in heaven, (and not) to these gods who are kept in the temples as if they were being kept shut up in prison.' When he had said this and much more, having been beaten at length with lead-weighted whips, he passed to the Lord. His body was thrown into the river Tiber. A cleric of this same priest, rightly named Justus, retrieved his body, and put it in his two-wheeled cart, and took it to his own little garden next to the walls on the Via Nomentana, and buried it there. For people praying to the Lord there, they receive what they ask through the intervention of that martyr, who suffered martyrdom for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here ends the letter of Marcellus, sent to Nereus and Achilleus. Here begins the reply concerning their martyrdom.

18. 'Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro, servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, (send greetings) to Marcellus. As your letter was addressed to SS. Nereus and Achilleus, thirty days have passed since they arrived at the crown (of martyrdom). Flavia Domitilla (is) a most illustrious, indeed most Christian

⁶¹ The temple of Vesta (*Aedes Vesta*), which housed the sacred fire of Rome (see Ovid, *Fasti* vi. 297–8) and was attended by the Vestal Virgins, was located at the south-eastern end of the Forum at the foot of the Palatine; see Platner–Ashby, pp. 557–9; Richardson, pp. 412–13; and R. T. Scott, 'Vesta, aedes', *LTUR* V, pp. 125–8

⁶² An *equuleus* was a wooden rack in the shape of a horse (not unlike a modern saw-horse); see Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 38–70.

⁶³ The reference is presumably to the Cloaca Maxima, which passed through the middle of the Forum Romanum and emptied into the river Tiber at the east end of Tiber Island. Its course passed alongside the *Aedes Vesta*, so would have been readily at hand to receive Felicula's body. See Platner–Ashby, pp. 126–7; Richardson, pp. 91–2; and H. Bauer, 'Cloaca, Cloaca Maxima', *LTUR* I, pp. 288–90.

⁶⁴ On the (unidentifiable) cemetery of St Felicula, supposedly at the seventh mile of the Via Ardeatina, see n. 24.

virgin, since these her eunuchs had taught her to believe in Christ and to preserve her virginity; Aurelian, her betrothed, (who) was held in contempt by her, had her relegated to this island [Ponza] because of her declaration of Christianity. Aurelian himself, coming here, began to solicit the attention of Nereus and Achilleus, thinking that he could influence the mind of his virgin (fiancée) through them. But the saints, cursing his gifts and strengthening the faith of Domitilla even more, were dealt with by him in terms of savage beatings; and, after being put (in prison) in Terracina, they were handed over to Memmius Rufus, the provincial governor (*consularis*).⁶⁵ When by means of the rack and by fire they were being forced by him to sacrifice to idols, and they said that, having been baptized by the apostle Peter, they would on no account sacrifice to idols, they were beheaded. Auspicius their disciple,⁶⁶ teacher of the holy virgin Domitilla, recovered their bodies; placing them in a little boat he took them away and buried them in a tufa crypt on the estate of Domitilla, on the Via Ardeatina, a mile and a half from the city walls,⁶⁷ next to the tomb in which Petronilla, the daughter of the apostle Peter, had been buried.⁶⁸ We learned this from the report of Auspicius himself, who recovered and buried their bodies. It will be (a mark) of your affection to treat us honourably, and to send to us someone who will assure us of your and our own well-being. The day of their martyrdom was 12 May.⁶⁹

19. After having received this letter, Marcellus sent his brother to the island [Ponza]. He remained with these confessors of Christ for a year, but thereafter returned to Marcellus and reported as follows. When Aurelian, after the martyrdom of Nereus and Achilleus, was taking steps to arrive at agreement with Domitilla, it was reported to him by someone that she had greater love for Eutyches and Victorinus and Maro than she had for her eunuchs Nereus and Achilleus, who had taught her to believe in Christ. Whence it transpired that he sought (permission) from the emperor Nerva⁷⁰ for them to be given to him, if they would not sacrifice.⁷¹ When Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro acted

⁶⁵ According to the *Notitia dignitatum*, the governor of the province of Campania did indeed hold the rank of *consularis*; see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1454. The reference is in any case an anachronism: the office of *consularis* was one created by Constantine.

⁶⁶ The Bollandists suggest identification with Auspicius, the first bishop of *Apta Iulia* (modern Apt in France, some forty miles north of Marseilles), who was martyred under Trajan and is commemorated on 2 August in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*; and cf. *BHL* 829–30.

⁶⁷ For the cemetery of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina, see n. 7.

⁶⁸ See nn. 19–22.

⁶⁹ This is the date on which they are commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 653).

⁷⁰ Nerva was emperor from the murder of Domitian (18 September 96) until his death on 27 or 28 January 98.

⁷¹ The implied legal situation is that Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro are slaves belonging to Domitilla; with the emperor's permission, Aurelian is able to purchase them compulsorily from Domitilla's estate. Aurelian thus acquired *patria potestas* over them (see n. 81).

bravely and paid no attention whatsoever to the threats of Aurelian, he took them off the island and placed them as his slaves on his individual estates: Eutyches at the sixteenth mile from Rome, on the Via Nomentana; but Victorinus at the sixtieth mile [of the Via Salaria], and Maro at the hundred-and-thirtieth mile, on the same Via Salaria.⁷² And he ordered that they were to dig in the ground all day long, and in the evening to eat bran.⁷³ But Almighty God showed them his favour in these foreign places: for Eutyches freed the daughter of the contractor (*conductor*)⁷⁴ of the place from the devil; Victorinus restored to health the paralysed vice-mayor (*vicedominus*) of the place,⁷⁵ who for three years had not got up from his bed; and Maro liberated the landlord's principal agent (*procurator*)⁷⁶ of the city of San Severino (*Septempeda*), who was struggling in the throes of dropsy.

20. Meanwhile, by preaching to the people they taught many to believe in Christ, and, once made priests, they greatly increased the population of believers. Then the devil filled the mind of Aurelian with rage, and he sent (agents) who would kill them by means of various tortures.⁷⁷ For he ordered that Eutyches be tortured in the middle of the road for as long as it took him to give up his spirit; the populace of Christians recovered his body and, when it had been buried with great honour, they built a basilica over it in the name of Christ.⁷⁸ Victorinus (was killed) in the place which is called

⁷² On the town of *Septempeda* (modern San Severino Marche in the Piceno), see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 392–3; for its precise location, see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 42 (E2). Note that *Septempeda* lies closest to the Via Flaminia, and is not at all close to the Via Salaria; so the author's topography is inaccurate in at least this respect.

⁷³ That is, bread of secondary quality made, not from pure flour, but from husks of wheat; the same low-quality bread was fed to soldiers.

⁷⁴ On the duties and function of a 'contractor' or 'chief tenant' (*conductor*) of an estate, see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2502–3 [H. Leclercq], and Jones, *LRE*, pp. 417 and 788–92. The man whose daughter was cured by Eutyches was apparently the contractor of Aurelian's estate at *Eretum* (see n. 78).

⁷⁵ The word *vicedominus* refers here to Aurelian's representative (*locum tenens*) at San Vittorino.

⁷⁶ The *procurator* was the landlord's agent with overall responsibility for the management of the estate; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 788–92. The difference between the agent (*procurator*) and the contractor (*conductor*) is that the contractor leased the land from the owner's agent, whereas the agent was employed directly by the owner.

⁷⁷ Aurelian is able to have Eutyches, Victorinus, and Maro executed without trial because, as he is the *paterfamilias* and they are his slaves, he has *patria potestas*—the power of life or death—over them. By the second century AD, however, the execution of slaves by the *paterfamilias* had been forbidden by some emperors; cf. *SHA*, *Hadrianus* xviii. 7: 'servos a dominis occidi vetuit'.

⁷⁸ The location of this basilica is unknown. The sixteenth mile of the Via Nomentana, reckoning from the Porta Collina, corresponds to the village of Casa Cotta, near the site of the ancient town of *Eretum*: see R. M. Ogilvie, 'Eretum', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 33 (1965), 70–112; S. Paoli and T. Sculloni, 'Il percorso della Via Nomentum–Eretum', in *L'area archeologica della Via Nomentum–Eretum* (Palombara Sabina, 2007), pp. 36–55, and esp. Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 448 and 457–8, with figs. 435A and 450A, who notes: 'Né un toponimo, né un resto monumentale ha tuttavia mai dato testimonianza

Cutiliae,⁷⁹ where there are stinking and sulphurous hot springs [the *Aquae Cutiliae*]; he [Aurelian] ordered that he be held in them head downwards for three hours, and then hanged. Victorinus suffered these torments for three days and then passed to the Lord. Aurelian ordered that his body not be buried. And one day, when it was lying near *Cutiliae*, the Christian populace of *Amiternum* came and recovered it, and took it to their own territory and buried it there.⁸⁰ He [Aurelian], having sent his friend named Turgius, ordered that Maro be led away and be placed under the weight of a huge stone. Whence it came about that they placed on his shoulders a massive stone, which seventy men could scarcely weigh on a mechanical scale. St Maro carried it for 2 miles as if it were light chaff, and then put it down in that place where he was accustomed to pray. And the populace of the entire province, having marvelled at this achievement, believed in Christ and was baptized. The governor (*consularis*), having received the authority from Aurelian, executed him.⁸¹ The people dug up the stone which he had carried on his shoulders, and buried him there, and built a church of Christ in his name: in which the Lord's bounties are performed to the glory of His name up until the present day.⁸²

dell'esistenza della basilica di S. Eutiche e dell'area funeraria in cui essa sorse, forse precocemente scomparse' (p. 458).

⁷⁹ *Cutiliae*, near the town of Reate in the Sabine hills, was the site of an imperial residence; the emperor Titus died there (Suetonius, 'Vespasian', c. 24, and 'Titus', c. 11); the hot springs were known as the *Aquae Cutiliae* (see following note).

⁸⁰ St Victorinus is commemorated on 24 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'In the town of *Amiternum*, at the eighty-third mile of the Via Salaria, Victorinus with two others' (Appendix III, p. 655). The site of ancient *Amiternum*, located some five miles from present-day L'Aquila and some ten miles from the *Aquae Cutiliae*, is a village known today as San Vittorino: see S. Segenni, *Amiternum e il suo territorio in età romana* (Pisa, 1985); for its location, and that of the *Aquae Cutiliae*, see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 42 (E4). St Victorinus was in effect the patron saint of *Amiternum* (see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 359–63). The remains of the saint were preserved there in a sarcophagus, which bore the following inscription: 'IVBENTE DEO CRISTO NOSTRO | SANCTO MARTVRI VICTORINO | QVODVVLTDEVS EPIS. DE SVO FECIT' (*CIL* IX, no. 4320; see discussion by Achelis, *Acta SS. Nerei et Achillei*, p. 46, and Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 360–1). Bishop Quodvultdeus, who commissioned the sarcophagus, is unknown; perhaps he was bishop of *Amiternum*. And see also L. Pani Ermini, *Il santuario del martire Vittorino in Amiternum e la sua catacomba* (Terni, 1975), and Saxer, 'I santi e i santuari antichi', pp. 277–95 ('S. Vittorino di Amiterno al LXXXIII miglio').

⁸¹ It is not clear how Aurelian—whose magistracy has never been stated—could have given authority for an execution, unless he were either the urban or praetorian prefect, or a deputy (*vicarius*) of one or other of them. But as Maro's owner, he would have had *patria potestas* over him, and could have executed him with impunity.

⁸² The siting of the church in the name of St Maro at the 130th mile of the Via Salaria indicates a location somewhere in the Piceno. There was a church of S. Marone in Civitanova Marche (ancient *Cluentum vicus*), located on the river Chienti about twenty-five miles south-east of Ancona; according to Lanzoni, St Maro was killed on a hill (the *Aureus Mons* mentioned in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 15 April: 'Picino in Aureo Monte Maronis') on the left bank of the river Chienti (ancient *fluvius Cluentus*), and buried 2 miles from the summit of the hill in the direction of the sea (*Le diocesi*, I, pp. 393–5). Delehay (Les origines du culte des

21. After Aurelian had removed all God's saints from the entourage of Domitilla, it happened that he said to Sulpicius and Servilianus, two illustrious young senators (*illustres*): 'I know that you have as your betrothed two foster-sisters⁸³ of Domitilla, that is, Euphrosyne and Theodora, both of them very learned virgins. When, therefore, I have had Domitilla taken from the island [Ponza] to Campania, have these two go to her for the sake of visiting her, and let them with their powers of persuasion call her mind back to my favour.' When Domitilla had been brought from the island of Ponza to Terracina,⁸⁴ and Euphrosyne and Theodora had gone to visit her, they had great happiness together. Meanwhile, when they came to dinner, they [the two women] were dining, while Domitilla was busy with fasting and prayer. Then her foster-sisters said to her: 'At this time, because we are dining and we are (soon to be) taking husbands, we cannot worship your God.' Domitilla says to them: 'Although you have as your betrothed men of noble birth, what would you do if some low-born and base women wished to pry you away from their love, so that they [your future husbands] could take them as wives?' They said in reply: 'May God keep such a thing from our minds!' Domitilla says to them: 'Likewise from my mind!—since I have a very noble bridegroom, the Son of God, Who came down from heaven, and promised to those who loved virginity that He would be the husband (of those who) guarded their virginity, and would grant them eternal life, so that, after the departure of their souls he would lead them into the eternal bridal-chamber in heaven, and would cause them to rejoice with the angels, and always celebrate amongst the fragrant flowers in the midst of Paradise, and feast in banquets without end. When the Son of God promised these things, and no one wished to believe Him, He began to restore the sight of blind persons, to cleanse lepers, to cure all illnesses, even to resuscitate the dead; and thus it happened that He revealed and showed Himself as the true God, and everyone believed in Him.'

22. Theodora says to her: 'I have a young brother Herod, whom you know: he suffers from blindness in his eyes incurred last year. If you speak the truth, heal him in the name of your God.' Euphrosyne also said: 'You left your blind brother at Rome. I have here the little daughter of my nurse, who became mute during an illness; she has good hearing, but her voice and speech have left her.' And on saying these things, she had her brought into her [Domitilla's] presence. Then Domitilla, prostrating herself in prayer, wept for a long time; getting up, she stretched out her hands to the heavens, and said: 'O Lord Jesus

martyrs, p. 314) also suggests identification with the village of Montoro (the name derived, presumably, from *Mons Aureus*) near Osimo.

⁸³ On the meaning of *collectaneas* ('nursed from the same breast'), see n. 57.

⁸⁴ On the martyrdom of Domitilla in *Tarracina* (modern Terracina), see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 147–8. On the site of ancient *Tarracina*, see G. Lugli, *Anxur-Terracina*, *Forma Italiae*, I/1 (Rome, 1926); A. Bianchini, *Storia di Terracina*, 2nd ed. (Terracina, 1977); and F. Coarelli, *Guide archeologiche Laterza: Lazio* (Bari and Rome, 1982), pp. 308–32.

Christ, Who said, ‘Behold I am with you all days up to the end of the world’;⁸⁵ show that my testimonial is true.’ And when she had said this, she made the sign of the Cross over the mouth of the mute child, and said: ‘In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, speak!’ And she immediately let out a great sound, saying: ‘Your God is true, Domitilla, and everything which you have said from your mouth is true.’ Then they both [Euphrosyne and Theodora] threw themselves at her feet, and, believing in the mysteries of Christ, were consecrated.⁸⁶ The blind brother of Theodora was brought to her; through the prayers of Domitilla he received the light of his mind and body. All the men and women, who as pagans had come from Rome, whether slaves or freeborn, believed in Christ on seeing these (miracles), and were baptized. And the house in which she was staying became a sort of church.

23. It happened that⁸⁷ Aurelian came with the two betrothed (senators), and himself as the third, along with three musicians,⁸⁸ so that the weddings of three virgins could take place on the one day. Sulpicius and Servilianus, on seeing the mute boy speak, and Herod, the brother of Theodora, regain his sight—(indeed) on hearing everything which had been said and done—believed (in Christ). When Aurelian earnestly insisted that they should take their brides on the same day, Sulpicius and Servilianus, wisest of men, said to him: ‘Pay respect to God, through Whose power we see a blind person receiving his sight and a mute person speaking.’ Aurelian, not caring for the things which were being said to him, had Domitilla locked in her bedchamber on his cognizance, so that, safe from danger, he could do violence to her. And when the organs had been set up after the feast, he began to dance happily among them. As he continued dancing in the way customary at weddings, with everyone else growing faint, he danced incessantly for two days and two nights, until he collapsed and expired. Seeing what had happened, everyone believed (in Christ).

24. The brother of Aurelian, named Luxurius, sought (authority) from the emperor Trajan⁸⁹ to compel all these people to sacrifice; if they would not consent, he would execute them by whatever means he wished. Whence it happened that he handed over Sulpicius and Servilianus to the urban prefect, Anianus.⁹⁰ Having confessed that they had recently been made Christians, and were no longer willing to sacrifice to the idols, the prefect ordered them to be

⁸⁵ Matt. 28: 20.

⁸⁶ That is, they took the veil and were consecrated as virgins, like Domitilla herself (see n. 42).

⁸⁷ Reading *ut* for the transmitted *et*.

⁸⁸ The word *organarius*, meaning simply ‘musician’, is attested in Augustine, *Serm.* ccci. 6 (*PL* XXXVIII, col. 1383); see *TLL* IX/2, col. 967 (‘i. qui utitur organo (sc. musico)’), and Blaise, p. 584.

⁸⁹ Trajan (98–117) succeeded Nerva as emperor.

⁹⁰ There is no record of an urban prefect named Anianus at this time; see Vigneaux, *Essai sur l’histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 227–8 (who notes that ‘tous ces récits sont malheureusement sans valeur historique’: p. 228), and Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 115–16.

decapitated. The Christians buried their bodies on their own estate at the second mile of the Via Latina, in which place their virtue abounds up to the present day.⁹¹

25. Thereafter Luxurius went to the virgins of Christ [Domitilla, Euphrosyne and Theodora] in the city of Terracina,⁹² and, since they did not wish to sacrifice to idols, when he had taken away all their possessions he locked them in the same room in which they once lived together, and set fire to it. The next day a saintly deacon named Caesarius found the unstained bodies of the virgins: lying prostrate on their faces, praying to the Lord, they had departed (this life). St Caesarius,⁹³ placing their bodies together in a new sarcophagus, buried them in the depths of the earth.

⁹¹ The notice of Pope Hadrian (772–95) in the *Liber pontificalis* mentions that SS. Simplicius [an error for Sulpicius] and Servilianus were buried in a catacomb beneath the basilica of SS. Gordianus and Epimachus, on the Via Latina (see Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 164). Unfortunately the catacombs on the Via Latina have not been thoroughly studied (in comparison, for example, with those on the Via Appia), and the precise location of the basilica of SS. Gordianus and Epimachus is unknown; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 129–31, at 131.

⁹² On ancient Terracina, see n. 82.

⁹³ St Caesarius is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 1 November as a saint of Terracina. There are several *passiones* of St Caesarius (*BHL* 1511–16) which, in the opinion of Dufourcq (*Gesta*, I, pp. 139–42) had become detached at some stage from the present *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilles. On St Caesarius, see F. Lanzoni, 'A proposito della Passione di San Cesario di Terracina', *RACr* 1 (1924), 146–8, and *idem*, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 148–50.

IX

SS. Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus

c.475 × 500; relevant to the cemetery of Bassilla/Hermes (Via Salaria Vecchia) and the cemetery of Apronianus (Via Latina)

The present *passio* has as its principal actor the virgin martyr Eugenia, who is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* on 25 December (see Appendix III, p. 650); but, on the model of earlier epic *passiones* such as nos. II, III, VI, and VIII, it incorporates accounts of other martyrdoms, in this case those of Eugenia's two eunuch slaves, Protus and Hyacinthus, of her father Philip, and of her companion, the Roman matron Bassilla.¹ The *passio* consists in effect of two complementary parts: the first, concerning Eugenia's sojourn in Egypt, in company with Protus and Hyacinthus, as members of a male community of monks, in which Eugenia remains in the disguise of a man (cc. 1–15); and the second, concerning Eugenia's return to Rome following the murder of her father Philip, and her role there as an adviser to a circle of Roman matrons, including Bassilla, on the virtues of virginity, which leads to her eventual martyrdom (cc. 16–21). Cécile Lanéry (based on the author's statement in c. 17) has characterized the two parts as presenting Eugenia's *palma castitatis* in Egypt and her *palma martyrii* in Rome.² The manuscript transmission of this *passio* (BHL 2267) is immensely complex,³ not least because an early redactor undertook to revise the text so as to eliminate its flagrant anachronisms and to recast it in more elegant Latin, with the result that the two originally separate redactions quickly became contaminated.⁴ The

¹ Listed BHL 2267 and CPL 2184; for discussion, see DACL VI/2, esp. cols. 2328–31 [H. Leclercq] and XIV/2, col. 1929 [H. Leclercq]; Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 191–2, 222–3 and 299–300; C. Bonner, 'The Trial of Saint Eugenia'; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 171–86; BSS V, cols. 181–3 [G. D. Gordini] and X, cols. 1221–3 [G. D. Gordini]; Whatley, 'Eugenia before Ælfric'; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 126–38; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 22–3.

² 'Hagiographie', p. 135; cf. c. 17 (Bassilla speaking): 'a double palm (of glory) awaits you in heaven: one which you acquired in Alexandria in the struggle for your virginity, the other which you are to receive now for the shedding of your blood.'

³ See Lanéry, *ibid.* pp. 130–4, and Whatley, 'Eugenia before Ælfric', pp. 351–61.

⁴ The 'revised' text (BHL 2666) was edited by Heribert Rosweyde (1615) and then reprinted in PL XXI, cols. 1105–22, and again at PL LXXIII, cols. 605–24.

priority of the present *passio* was first demonstrated convincingly by Hippolyte Delehaye;⁵ the following discussion is therefore concerned solely with the earliest redaction (BHL 2667).

The first part of the *passio* (cc. 1–15) is set in Egypt, where Eugenia's father Philip has been sent as prefect (*praefectus Augustalis*), in AD 192, to govern the province, taking with him his wife Claudia and his three children, his sons Avitus and Sergius, and his daughter Eugenia, who is exceptionally well instructed in liberal studies. While reading the (apocryphal) *acta* of Paul and Thecla, Eugenia is seized by the desire to reject pagan religion altogether, and to embrace Christianity (c. 1). In order to accomplish this, she gets permission from her father to travel to their country estate together with her slave-boys Protus and Hyacinthus (c. 2). In collaboration with them she hatches the plan of shaving her head, dressing like a man, and entering a monastery (c. 3).⁶ She approaches a holy man named Helenus, a bishop and apparently the abbot of an unnamed monastery, and together with Protus and Hyacinthus is accepted as a monk (even though Helenus has been informed in a vision that she is a woman) (cc. 4–7). This part of the *passio* thus takes the form of numerous other stories concerning transvestite female saints, such as St Marina (BHL 5228) and St Pelagia (BHL 6605).⁷ Meanwhile, the donkeys which were pulling Eugenia's sedan chair return home on their own, whereupon her family all believe that she is dead; but Eugenia progresses rapidly in her monastic education, and on the death of Helenus is even offered the abbacy; which she politely declines (c. 8). All goes well until Eugenia happens to cure an ailing and wealthy local matron named Melanthia, who falls in love with Eugenia, thinking that she is a young man (cc. 10–11). When Eugenia vehemently rejects Melanthia's advances, Melanthia goes in a rage to the prefect, claiming that Eugenia has attempted to rape her (c. 12). Eugenia, still dressed as a man, is brought for trial before the prefect (her unwitting father Philip), with the crowd baying for her execution. Eugenia exculpates herself by momentarily baring her breasts and revealing her true identity (c. 13). Her father and his entire household are converted to Christianity, and Philip even becomes a bishop. A successor is dispatched from Rome to

⁵ Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 175–8.

⁶ The existence of a monastery of male monks at the end of the second century AD is a flagrant anachronism.

⁷ The topos of the female transvestite is widespread in late antique (and Byzantine) literature, and there is extensive bibliography; see Patlagean, 'L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine'; J. Anson, 'The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motif', *Viator* 5 (1974), 1–32, at 12, 19–20, and esp. 21–5 and 27–8; Consolino, 'Modelli di santità femminile', pp. 101–6; Delierneux, 'Virilité physique et sainteté féminine'; S. J. Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex', pp. 16–25 (who relates the *passio* of St Eugenia to the *acta* of Paul and Thecla [BHG 1710]); and E. Paoli, 'La sessualità nella letteratura agiografica', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 53 (2006), 701–67, at 711–20 on the *passiones martyrum*.

assume the prefecture, and the new prefect quickly arranges the murder of Philip (c. 15). Eugenia buries her father's body near Nitria, where her mother endows a hospital and her brothers build a basilica; thereafter they all return to Rome (c. 16).

The remainder of the *passio* is set in Rome (cc. 16–21), where Eugenia and her mother become actively engaged in converting Christians. Many years have evidently passed since the murder of Philip and the events in Egypt, for one of the Roman matrons converted by Eugenia to Christianity, Bassilla, is said to be the niece of the emperor Gallienus (sole emperor from 260 until 268). Bassilla is duly baptized by Pope Soter—a ludicrous anachronism, given that Soter's pontificate fell during the years 162–70—and Eugenia gifts her two eunuch slaves, Protus and Hyacinthus, to Bassilla (c. 16). Meanwhile, Bassilla's Christian conversion is reported to Pompeius, her betrothed, who is a pagan (c. 18); and Gallienus decrees that Bassilla is either to sacrifice or to be executed. She remains intransigent and is duly executed by sword in her own home, her execution being followed by those of Protus and Hyacinthus (c. 19). Next, Eugenia is forced to sacrifice at the temple of Diana, and refuses to do so, whereupon she too is executed (c. 20) and then buried by Christians at an unspecified location on the Via Latina (c. 21).

The reason why Protus and Hyacinthus have to be transferred from the ownership of Eugenia to that of Bassilla is that they were known to be buried in the cemetery of Bassilla (on the Via Salaria Vecchia). The *Depositio martyrum* notes their burial there against 11 September: 'Protus and Hyacinthus, in the cemetery of Bassilla' (Appendix I, p. 636). Pope Damasus composed an epigram in their honour, which mentions that they were brothers, but says nothing of their being eunuchs (Appendix II (t), p. 648).⁸ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* likewise records their burial there against 11 September: 'Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in the cemetery of Bassilla, SS. Protus and Hyacinthus, who were teachers of Christian doctrine to St Eugenia and Bassilla' (Appendix III, p. 656), a statement clearly indebted to the present *passio*. And in all three seventh-century itineraries the burial of Bassilla is recorded alongside those of SS. Protus and Hyacinthus (Appendix IV (a) [§2], (b) [§12], and (c) [§4], pp. 660, 664, and 665). The cemetery of Bassilla is well known, and may be visited today on the Via Bertolini.⁹ It was in this cemetery that in 1844 the pioneering palaeo-Christian archaeologist Giuseppe Marchi

⁸ The representation of Protus and Hyacinthus as eunuchs is probably an invention by the author of the present *passio*, under the influence of the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (no. VIII). See discussion by De Gaiffier, 'Palatins et eunuques', pp. 38–40.

⁹ See Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 568–81; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 261–3; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 115–18; L. Spera, 'Bassillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium I*, pp. 211–14; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 21–32. Note that, at a later date, the cemetery of Bassilla came to be known as the cemetery of Hermes (S. Ermete).

discovered intact the tomb of St Hyacinthus,¹⁰ identified by means of an inscription: 'D(e)P(ositus) III IDVS SEPTE(m)BR(es) YACINTVS MARTYR'.¹¹ As Pasquale Testini has observed, this is the only occasion on which a martyr's tomb has been discovered intact: the tomb contained ashes and remains of burned bones, which were apparently wrapped up in linen with gold thread.¹² The tomb of Protus, however, and that of Bassilla have not been identified.¹³ Bassilla was arguably the founder of the cemetery; a woman of the same name was martyred on 22 September in AD 304, judging from an entry in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 636). But whether Bassilla, the putative founder of the cemetery, is identical with the martyr of AD 304, is unclear. In any case, the account of her martyrdom in the present *passio* is pure fiction.

The present *passio* records that St Eugenia was buried on the Via Latina (c. 21). The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* commemorates her martyrdom against 25 December as follows: 'Rome, on the Via Latina, in the cemetery of Apronianus, the martyrdom of St Eugenia the virgin' (Appendix III, p. 650). This entry provides essential information lacking in the *passio* itself: for the 'cemetery of Apronianus' was discovered in 1937 at the second mile of the Via Latina.¹⁴ One of the seventh-century itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum urbis Romae*, records that, 'here on this same road [sc. the Via Latina] lies St Eugenia, virgin and martyr, in a crypt (beneath) the church' (Appendix IV (a) [§7], p. 661); another itinerary, *De locis sanctis martyrum*, adds the detail that her mother was buried with her in the same tomb (Appendix IV (b) [§7], p. 663).¹⁵ These entries imply the existence of an above-ground church of St Eugenia. According to the *Liber pontificalis*, Pope John VII (705–7) restored the basilica of St Eugenia, 'which had for a long time been roofless and damaged',¹⁶ and the continuing existence of this church is recorded in the

¹⁰ G. Marchi, *Monumenti delle arti cristiane primitive nella metropoli del cristianesimo* (Rome, 1844), pp. 263–8.

¹¹ *ICUR* X, no. 26662.

¹² Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 262: 'È questo il primo ed unico caso di un sepolcro di martire intatto: nel loculo si rinvennero ceneri e resti di ossa bruciate, che un tempo dovevano essere avvolte in un tessuto dai fili d'oro'. The ashes and charred human bones may imply that Hyacinthus was executed by being burned alive.

¹³ But see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 576. According to later tradition, the remains of both martyrs (Protus and Hyacinthus) were removed from this cemetery to the Vatican: see Cecchelli, 'Sulla traslazione dei martiri Proto e Giacinto'.

¹⁴ For the discovery of the cemetery, see E. Josi, 'Cimitero cristiano sulla via Latina', *RACr* 16 (1939), 19–48, and 197–240, and 17 (1940), 7–39; and, more recently, A. Augenti, *Ipsi lapides ululant nobiscum*. Il suburbio orientale di Roma tra la tarda antichità e l'alto medioevo', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen âge* 103/1 (1991), pp. 41–82, at 69–70 and 76–9; D. Nuzzo, 'Aproniani cimiterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 141–3; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 132–4.

¹⁵ This detail presumably derives from the statement in the present *passio* (c. 21), that 'Her sons buried her [Claudia] near their sister'.

¹⁶ Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 90.

entries in the *Liber pontificalis* for Popes Hadrian I (772–95) and Leo III (795–816).¹⁷ No trace of it remains today.¹⁸

The present *passio* was instrumental in establishing the cult of St Eugenia. Although she is not commemorated in any of the early sacramentaries (Appendix V)—the date of her feast (25 December) clashed too obviously with Christmas—she was depicted in mosaics as far afield as Ravenna (S. Apollinare Nuovo) and Naples (S. Gennaro). Of these, that in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna probably dates from the fifth or sixth century,¹⁹ indicating a rough *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *passio*. Some features of the *passio* arguably derive from earlier essays in the genre: the portrayal of Eugenia's slave-boys as eunuchs, for example, was probably influenced by the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (no. VIII). On the other hand, the poet Alcimius Avitus (c.450–526), composing the last book of his *Poema de Mosaicae historiae gestis* [CPL 995] at the very beginning of the sixth century, refers to the virgin Eugenia in lines 503–33 of Book VI (*De virginitate*) of that work, in language which indicates familiarity with the present *passio*;²⁰ and the *Regula Magistri*, composed during the first part of the sixth century, likewise reveals knowledge of the *passio*.²¹ In sum these various debts probably indicate a date of composition for the present work in the latter years of the fifth century.²²

Text. The situation regarding the text of this *passio* (BHL 2667) is dire. The only printed edition is that of Mombricitus (II, pp. 391–7), but his text is unreliable and infested with errors of many kinds. Part of the problem is that the *passio* was redacted, probably soon after it was composed, in order to eliminate its manifest anachronisms, and this later redaction (BHL 2666) became contaminated in transmission with the earlier work, and vice versa. It is therefore impossible even to produce an accurate list of surviving witnesses to the two redactions.²³ Gordon Whatley has usefully collated a number of manuscripts of the earlier *passio*, enough to throw helpful light on the nature of the text printed by Mombricitus, especially its numerous omissions.²⁴

¹⁷ Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, pp. 163–4 and 201, respectively.

¹⁸ See A. Augenti, 'Eugeniae basilica, monasterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 226–7.

¹⁹ F. W. Deichmann, *Frühchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Baden-Baden, 1958), pls. 128 and 238.

²⁰ The poem by Avitus is ed. R. Peiper, *MGH, AA VI/2*, pp. 199–294, with Book VI, which is evidently a late addition to the work, at pp. 275–94. Gordon Whatley makes the important observation that line 524 of Book VI—*conscia cum sexus proprii cordisque pudici*—reflects the wording of c. 8 of the present *passio* ('beata Eugenia recusabat, conscia sexus'): 'Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 357 n. 33.

²¹ *Regula magistri*, cc. xi. 32–4, xxxiii. 18, and xcv. 15 (ed. A. de Vogüé, *Sources chrétiennes* CVI, pp. 14, 180, and 446 respectively, with discussion at p. 216).

²² Thus Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 126 ('2^{de} moitié du V^e siècle').

²³ See the valuable list compiled by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 132–4, who was able to draw on the collations of Gordon Whatley.

²⁴ 'Eugenia before Ælfric', pp. 356–63.

The present translation is based perforce on the edition of Mombrtitus, but I have not hesitated to emend where what he prints is nonsense, and have incorporated the omissions from his text as signalled by Gordon Whatley. The chapter numbering is my own.

1. During his seventh consulship the emperor Commodus²⁵ sends the senator Philip to Egypt, so that he might assume the prefecture of Alexandria,²⁶ and all the local authorities that were being administered throughout Egypt would be subject to his authority.²⁷ This Philip, coming from Rome together with his wife Claudia and their two sons, Avitus and Sergius, and their daughter, Eugenia, placed the entire province under Roman administration.²⁸ His daughter, Eugenia, was exceedingly attractive in appearance, but even more attractive for her intelligence. In her sixteenth year²⁹ she was found to be so well trained in liberal studies in Greek and Latin, and conducted herself with such seriousness, that even the philosophers admired her. And then when she was asked by her father whether she would consent to become the wife of Aquilinus, the son of a consul,³⁰ she replied: 'A husband is to be chosen more for his probity than for his lineage; we should consider his morals, not his social class.' Accordingly, when through her devotion to chastity she had resisted many others seeking her hand, there came into her hands a copy of the letter of St Paul and the story of the virgin Thecla;³¹ reading it secretly every day, she wept; and although she was the child of purely pagan parents, she began to become Christian in her heart. And when

²⁵ The seventh consulship of Commodus (and the second of P. Helvius Pertinax) fell in AD 192. Commodus (the son of Marcus Aurelius) was emperor from 180 until he was murdered on 31 December 192.

²⁶ No prefect of Egypt named Philip is attested in historical sources; see O. W. Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*, *Klio Beiheft* 34 (Leipzig, 1935), pp. 131–9, esp. 137, and G. Bastianini, 'Lista dei prefetti d'Egitto dal 30 a.c. al 299 p.c.', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975), 263–328.

²⁷ As Whatley points out, the text printed by Mombrtitus here is corrupt; he notes that the manuscripts he has collated read, 'ut et praefecturam Alexandriae ageret et omnes potestates quae per totam Egyptum administrabantur eius ditioni deseruirent' ('Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 358) (thus translated).

²⁸ Once again the text printed by Mombrtitus is corrupt; Whatley shows that the text must originally have read, 'a Roma ad Alexandriam ueniens, omnem prouinciam Romana moderatione composuit' (*ibid.*) (thus translated).

²⁹ The implication is that Eugenia was born in AD 176. This dating has interesting bearing on the account of her martyrdom under the principate of Gallienus (253–68), below, c. 20: for if the author's preposterous chronology is followed, Eugenia will have been 84 years old at the time of her death, and her mother Claudia, who survived her (c. 21), well over 100.

³⁰ In the *passio* of St Sebastian, mention is made of a consul named Aquilinus (III.65), which possibly prompted mention of the present Aquilinus, son of a consul.

³¹ BHG 1710. The Greek *acta* of Paul and Thecla are ed. Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I, pp. 235–69, and trans. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 272–81; and see also S. J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla. A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), esp. pp. 8–26.

she had daily turned over in her mind by what means she might gain access to Christian teaching, she sought permission from her parents to depart from the city for their country villa.

2. And while she was making the journey, she was turning over in her mind the story of Thecla, which she was reading in her sedan chair. Then she said to her slave-boys, Protus and Hyacinthus:³² 'It is not unknown to you, who have been my learned companions during my literary studies, what great fictions are contrived by the poets concerning God, and what great things the philosophers contemplate and perceive. But can you hear anything greater and truer concerning God than what is said in these *acta* [of Paul and Thecla]? Is not this form of worship—to believe that God is a stone and to call upon a wooden image for assistance—absurd and disgraceful?' Meanwhile, as they were continuing their journey, they began to discuss the true God and the various sects of the pagans,³³ and to establish that nothing better could be perceived among them than this message. And while they were discussing this and similar things through verbal exchange, she heard some Christians chanting that 'all the gods of the pagans were demons, but that God created the heavens'.³⁴ Upon hearing these things Eugenia ordered the sedan chair to stop; and, after reflecting a long while on the meaning and force of the chant, she said: 'We are being confronted by a very opportune testimony. Let all this worthlessness and useless study of past error cease. If we do not wish to perish, it is essential for us to believe. Let us do what we see being done so wisely.'

3. Therefore, while they went over these things in mutual discussion, and while they discussed the true God in their verbal exchanges, agreement concerning the (true) faith emerges, and a procedure is sought whereby a holy escape can be implemented by which non-belief in the devil is rejected and faith in the Lord is maintained. Then Eugenia speaks to Protus and Hyacinthus in these terms: 'Human foolhardiness made me your mistress, but wisdom (made me) your sister. Let us be brothers in spirit, harmony, determination and wisdom, and, abandoning all trace of human dignity, let us hasten in an orderly manner to the men of God. But so that we do not become separated through some mischance, begin first by shaving off my hair. But tomorrow, let our passage to the men of God take place; and with you two on my right and left next to the sedan chair, let us all three, in male attire, make haste to join the men of God.'³⁵ This plan was agreeable to both of them; and on the following night everything is done as planned. Christ deigned to show

³² Protus and Hyacinthus are described here as 'her slave-boys' (*pueros suos*); we learn subsequently that they are eunuchs (c. 13).

³³ As Whatley points out, the text printed by Mombricitus here is corrupt; the manuscripts which he has collated read, 'coeperunt...discutere de uero [Mombricitus: *debere*] Deo et diuersarum gentium sectis' ('Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 359) (thus translated).

³⁴ Ps. 95: 5.

³⁵ For the extensive bibliography on late antique female transvestitism, see n. 6.

such favour to those believing in Him, that immediately as they mounted the sedan chair, Bishop Helenus came up, accompanied by a throng chanting psalms. They were chanting in one voice: 'The way of the just is straight, and the pathway of the saints is prepared.'³⁶ Then Eugenia said to her companions: 'Consider the force of these chants, and see if what we heard the Christians singing to God applies to us. Thus, when our discussion was concerned with devotion to God, we heard them singing: "All the gods of the pagans are demons; for God created the Heavens." And behold, when we were not retreating from the worship of idols, a thousand voices confront us, saying, "The way of the just is straight, and the pathway of the saints is prepared." Let us therefore associate ourselves with these singing crowds, and let us proceed as if we were counted among their number as companions, until we come to their notice.'

4. Accordingly, when they have associated themselves with the psalm singers, they ask who is the elder who alone is being borne on a donkey in the midst of the crowd. Then she heard from someone that he was Helenus the bishop, who had been an extremely devout Christian from his infancy, who while still a boy set out from the monastery and sought fire from a neighbouring (house), (and) he brought back unharmed the burning coals in his clothing.³⁷ But why should I report miracles from his distant past? Recently a magician named Zereas came here, who was trying to turn the people away from the holy scriptures—he even dared to stage a verbal combat with the holy Helenus! Then father Helenus, recognizing his cleverness and not being able to defeat him in debate, said in the presence of the entire populace: 'What is the point, O my sons, of certain weak persons being confounded by our argument? But since the course of my argument not only is not raising up those lying down, but even is causing those standing to totter, it is essential to establish what God's (authority) is. Light a fire in the centre of the city, and let us both enter the fire with you all as witnesses. Let the preaching of the one who is not burned by it be believed as true by everyone.' This was agreeable to the entire populace, for a very great part of the people had already been subverted by the magician. At once a substantial fire is kindled. When it had been lit, Helenus ordered that both of them should enter it fearlessly. To this

³⁶ Cf. Isa. 26: 7 ('semita iusti recta; est rectus callis iusti ad ambulandum'). Jerome, in his *Comm. in Isaiam* translates the verse, following the LXX, in words which more closely resemble what is quoted here: 'uia iustorum recta, recta facta est uia iustorum, et praeparata' (CCSL LXXIII, p. 332).

³⁷ The holy man Helenus is taken over from Rufinus' Latin translation of the *Historia monachorum* [CPG 5620], xi. 9–10 (ed. E. Schulz-Flügel, *Tyrannius Rufus: Historia monachorum sive De vita sanctorum patrum* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 326–31); but this Helenus is not a bishop, and does not have a confrontation with a magician named Zereas. The only significant detail derived from the *Historia monachorum* is the report that, when Helenus was a boy, he used to transport burning coals in his cloak from a neighbouring monastery (xi. 9. 2; ed. Schulz-Flügel, p. 326).

Zereas said: 'It is not so', he said; 'but let each of us enter by himself. You, however, should go first, (since) you asked for this (trial) to take place.' And he [Helenus] immediately looked to the heavens with his hands outstretched, and, pouring out a prayer, said: 'You know, my Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Who appeared as fourth to the Three Youths in the furnace, that no desire for human glory prompted me (to this), but rather my concern for the salvation of my people, over which You deigned to appoint me as leader, which the devil through his agent, calling them away from the straight way, wishes to drive headlong to death. For the sake of the salvation of these people I enter the flames, believing that I shall find there (heavenly) dew pouring down on me, so that I am not touched in any way by the fire.' And saying this and signing himself with the Cross, standing fearless in the name of the Lord, he stood there a long while completely unharmed (by the flames). Then the people thrust Zereas into the flames with him. And when he started to burn, the blessed Helenus ran up and snatched him away, though he was half-burned; and the entire crowd expelled him with execration; but, as you see,³⁸ (the crowd) follows him [Helenus] every day in praising the Lord.

5. Then Eugenia, together with Protus and Hyacinthus, throws herself at the knees of him who was explaining these things to her; and she asks that they might be considered worthy to be drawn by him to the notice of Helenus. The man replied to them: 'It is his habit to rest after he has celebrated the morning services; when he gets up, see that you present yourselves to him.' Eugenia said to him: 'Be so kind as to make a tiny suggestion of this sort concerning us to him: "Three young boys who are brothers and Romans in origin, who are today abandoning the worship of idols, having entered here following your footsteps, ask that they be presented in person to your blessed self."' Meanwhile, while these things are being discussed, the elder, although sleeping, knew from a vision everything that was happening. When he had awakened, the venerable Eutropius reported this to him, saying: 'Three young brothers, unanimously abandoning the worship of idols, wish to be associated with the number of those serving Christ—whose wish I recognized at once as valid—so that they may deserve to be made known to your blessed self.' Then the blessed Helenus said: 'I give thanks to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Who made me informed thanks to Your revelation, such that these things which I am now hearing about are revealed clearly to me.' Therefore when the three youths had been sent in to him, he poured out a prayer; when he had finished it, he grasped Eugenia's hand, and, taking her aside with her companions, said: 'Although I recognize through the intercession of the man of God [Eutropius] that you

³⁸ The person speaking these words to Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus is apparently the person who earlier identified Helenus for them (*audiuit a quodam quod hic esset Helenus*); but the narrator has muddled the distinction between direct and reported speech. The person is subsequently named as Eutropius (c. 5).

wished to see me, a humble servant of Christ, yet I desire to hear from you your reasons for seeing me, so that I can give thanks for your good intentions.’ Then Eugenia said: ‘Recognizing that the divine Majesty cannot reside in any metal or wood, and inquiring as to what was the true religion in which the true God is to be adored and worshipped, we heard issuing from this place men chanting in unison that “all the gods of the pagans are demons, but our God made the heavens”. Challenged by this rational statement, we abandoned the vain superstition of idol worship; and, hastening here, we found a congregation following the footsteps of your venerable self. Having associated ourselves with them, we entered here believing in God. A family bond joins us three: one of these is called Protus, the other Hyacinthus, (and) I am called Eugenius.’

6. To whom the blessed Helenus replied: ‘Rightly are you called Eugenius, because you have offered yourself to act manfully in the struggle. You should know that you were revealed to me by the Lord as Eugenia, and whence you came here and whose daughter you are, and that the Lord showed clearly to me what these companions are to you.’ And, soothing their spirits with his sacred admonition, he promised that for three months they could visit churches and monasteries with him, so that he could perfect their knowledge of the religion of Christ and strengthen them through the sacred sanctification of baptism; after this he recalled them and entrusted them as servants of God to the monastery in which they had learned the rudiments of the faith, as was fitting. He trusted, however, that this was not to be revealed to any of those who were there.

7. Let us now return to that time when Protus and Hyacinthus, accompanying Eugenia, had departed (for the monastery). The sedan chair, drawn by beasts of burden, had therefore returned to (Eugenia’s) mother. Everyone runs up rejoicing; and, finding nothing in the carriage, they all simultaneously give out a great moan. There was a sudden commotion throughout the city. For who could even comprehend that a prefect had lost his blessed daughter? Accordingly there was immense wailing of unimaginable lamentation. Everyone was in mourning: the parents for their daughter, the brothers for their sister, the slaves for their mistress; and sadness and infinite distress possessed everyone. A search is launched throughout the entire province; soothsayers are interrogated, sorcerers³⁹ are questioned, idols are propitiated with sacrifices. All reply with one voice: Eugenia was carried up into heaven by the immortal gods. The father believes this; and turning his grief into consolation he turns to celebration the replies (he received) and, dedicating her to the company of the gods, he commissioned a metal statue of her out of pure gold. Her mother Claudia and her brothers Avitus and Sergius could not be comforted by any consolation, but wept for her inconsolably.

³⁹ Reading *pythones* (‘sorcerers’, ‘diviners’) for Mombricitus’ *phytones*. The usage is biblical (Deut. 18: 11; 4 Kgs. 23: 24); see Blaise, p. 687, and *TLL* X/2, col. 2784.

8. But the blessed Eugenia remained together with Protus and Hyacinthus in the aforesaid monastery with her male attire and behaviour. There she progressed with her extensive instruction in Christ such that, in her second year, she had memorized nearly all the divine scriptures. In the third year after her conversion, he who was in charge of the brothers [i.e. Helenus] passed to the Lord. After his death it was agreeable to everyone that they should elect 'Eugenius' to be their leader. Then the blessed Eugenia, in awareness of her sex,⁴⁰ refused (the possibility) that a woman should have governance over men of God. She likewise was afraid that she would sadden and offend all those who were unanimously petitioning her. But when she saw that they were all intent on this result, she addressed them with these words: 'Whenever something is to be done with general consent among an assembly of Christians, the precepts of Christ should be obeyed in this situation. Whence, if you approve, let the gospels of Christ's sacred words be brought forward, so that we may hear what He commanded in this matter.' And when it [a gospel book] had been brought, she honoured it, opened it, and turning the pages, came to the place she was looking for and, having requested silence, she began to recite this sentiment of our Lord Jesus Christ: 'For He said to his disciples: "Do you not know that the leaders of peoples are greater than those whom they govern and whose sovereignty they exercise? With you it is not thus: but if someone among you wishes to be greater, let him be your servant"'.⁴¹ And when she had read this out, she said: 'On these terms I shall agree to your request, in order that I may pursue the commands of Christ. For a servant ought to obey his fellow servants, such that he places the will of his lord before their will.' She therefore assumes the name of prior for this reason alone, that she not disappoint those petitioning her unanimously; and, in being heedless of herself, she began to be concerned for all the others. For she took on herself the chores which the most insignificant person was accustomed to perform, and began to draw water from the well, chop firewood, attend to the cleaning, and do what was necessary in the kitchen for the sustenance of the brothers.

9. And then she set up her cell in the place where the guest-master of the monastery lived, so that she would not show herself as superior even to him. But of course she was found to be in the vanguard of everyone in keeping vigil and singing to God; nor among them all was anyone to be found who was proved to be greater than her in humility. Thus she was concerned for everyone to understand that no one would be allowed to utter words of

⁴⁰ The manuscripts collated by Whatley here read *conscia sexus* for Mombritius' *conscientia sexus* ('Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 357, n. 33).

⁴¹ Cf. Matt. 20: 25–7 in the Vulgate translation ('Scitis quia principes gentium dominantur eorum, et qui maiores sunt potestatem exercent in eos; non ita erit inter vos, sed quicumque voluerit inter vos maior fieri, sit vester minister, et qui voluerit inter vos primus esse, erit vester servus'). Eugenia's version of these verses is recorded as an independent witness in the Vetus Latin Database (Brepolis).

swearing or to chatter away in trivial speech. For she said to them all: 'We demonstrate from His teachings with what great reverence we render service to God, if we establish for Him in our hearts such personal behaviour, which ought not to be condemned by that teaching. For whoever is taught to perform deeds prohibited by Him and neglects to obey His orders, denies that He is his Lord.' She therefore pursued these daily admonitions, and she did not cease by day or night from divine conversation and prayer. Thus she began to become even dearer to God, such that she could drive out demons, and the Lord would save through her whatsoever sick persons she visited. But because many are her achievements, which are too long to relate, let us proceed as far as brevity allows.

10. A certain very rich and nobly-born woman named Melanthia, having been exhausted by quartan fevers for a long time, came to Eugenia.⁴² And when she [Eugenia] had made the sign of the Cross over her chest, she vomited up the entire quantity of the deadly humour; and, restored to health, she hastened back to the estate which she owned in the vicinity of the monastery. From that time forth, as if in token of her admiration, she frequently went to (visit) her and, not realizing that she was a woman, began to love—in a way that was not fitting—the saint by whom she had been cured. Thinking her to be like herself, she addressed her privately in these words: 'Why do you torture yourself with these pointless abstinences and lose the flower of your attractive youth—as if the Lord loved the wretched, adopted those who are burned out, nourished those scorning His delights, and cherished only the torments of men? And why does everyone therefore pursue divine oracles so that he may flourish with joyous success and enjoy happy times? We seem to be abusing the gifts of God and to be thanklessly paying back to our benefactor what He gives us. Whence through your deserts believe that I am your master, so that through my command you may put an end to these afflictions and enjoy joyous and happier times. Be the master of my affairs: and indeed you will be made my master. For rank and the aristocratic birthright of the nobility adorns me, and my infinite wealth is abounding. I do not think that there will be any injustice in my "master" if you deign to become my husband and to enjoy a time of happiness which you have (formerly) devoted to misery.' With Melanthia saying these and similar things, the blessed Eugenia opposed her with salutary warnings; and wishing to free her soul from the devil's trap, she demonstrated to her that the world's desires are worthless, and that they flee when they are thought to be possessed, and that momentary delights bring perpetual damages; nor should one give in at all to

⁴² Reading *uenit ad Eugeniam* in lieu of *uenit ad eam Eugenia* (Mombritius), for the sequel makes clear that Melanthia, having travelled to Eugenia, thereafter 'hastened back to the estate which she owned'.

bodily desire, because it soothes so that it may defile, is enticed so that it may take possession, promises happiness so that it may destroy.

11. As Eugenia proceeded with these and similar (arguments), Melanthia turned a deaf ear. For a hidden disaster had occupied her heart and, as it is written, 'healthy wisdom will not enter an evil soul'.⁴³ Meanwhile, as Eugenia was trying to snatch Melanthia from the snare of death, Melanthia, on the contrary, was considering how she might trap Eugenia. Illness is feigned. Melanthia asks that she be cured by Eugenia. And when Eugenia had entered so as to visit her and was sitting in her bedroom, the wretched Melanthia tried to approach her with obscene embraces, and to urge her on to sin with wanton words. Then the blessed Eugenia, putting out her right hand (and) making the sign of the Cross on her forehead, said in a very clear articulation of her voice, with a moan: 'Rightly are you known by the name Melanthia, for you are filled with the treachery of blackness; black you shall be called, and the dark friend of the devil's shadows, the chief of pollution, the kindling of wantonness, the sister of perpetual anxiety, and the daughter of eternal death. Depart from the neck of Christ, you deceiver and insane seducer of the heart! There is no place for you in company with the servants of Christ.'

12. When she [Melanthia] had heard this, she was inflamed, and not being able to tolerate the shame of her discovery (and) anticipating also that she would be revealed to the ears of gossip if she did not herself first make the revelation, she returned to Alexandria; and in a public appeal she began to intimate the following in the hearing of the prefect: that she had encountered a wicked young man, who describes himself as a Christian; that he had come for the sake of healing her, because he said that he could offer assistance to sick persons; that when she had him enter, 'he had the audacity to begin to address me impudently with rash words and to urge me to sin with shameless persuasion'.⁴⁴ Why say more? In the end he attacked me, just as a barbarian (rapes) a captive woman; and unless I had been rescued by the assistance of a young female slave who was in the bedroom, he would have subjected me to his sexual desires.' On hearing this the prefect was enraged; and having dispatched a number of his agents, he bound them all over in chains and appointed a day for a public spectacle on which, hearing the case in the presence of the people in the amphitheatre, he would order them to be consigned to the beasts. On the appointed day the spectacle was being mounted, and the blessed Eugenia together with the men of God was led out

⁴³ Cf. *Wisd.* 1: 4 in the Vulgate translation ('quoniam in malivolam animam non intrabit sapientia'). No variant version of this verse is recorded in the *Vetus Latina Database*.

⁴⁴ As Whatley points out ('Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 351, n. 8), Melanthia's words echo the story of Joseph and the wife of Potiphar (*Gen.* 39: 7–23); cf. R. Abusch, 'Eunuchs and Gender Transformation: Philo's Exegesis of the Joseph Narrative', in *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. S. Tougher (London, 2002), pp. 103–21.

in chains. The muttering⁴⁵ of the people resonated among those who were ignorant of the truth. There were various opinions among the low-born populace concerning the accusations made by Melanthia: some thought they [Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus] should be burned alive, some thought they should be subjected to various tortures, others cried out that they ought to be eaten alive by savage wild beasts.

13. Then the prefect, having requested silence, commanded that she stand before him in the sight of everyone; and, by way of interrogation, he said to her: 'Tell me, gallows bait, what audacity drove you to assault the noble woman Melanthia? Did you think that some sort of vile person, entering her room in the guise of a Christian faith healer, could stimulate aristocratic chastity to the disgrace of the whore-house? Does your Christ teach you these things? And is this the totality of your religious profession, that you devote your attention to corrupt practices?' Then Eugenia addressed the prefect with these words: 'I had indeed hoped to challenge the crime imputed to me by conscience alone, and to leave the rumour of false accusation to a future judge. True chastity cannot be frightened: whatever worldly opinion thinks of it will pass away with the world itself. Modesty is not directed by wise persons at the approbation of men, but at the glory of God; (likewise) is purity preserved, chastity retained: and because the Christian spirit acts manfully for the love of God, I did not wish my faith to be of a feminine nature. I reflected on the false pretence, inimical to all honesty, by which a woman imitates a man, but rather that if for love of vice a man touches a woman, this is punished by the law; but if for love of virtue the weaker sex imitates masculine behaviour, this ought to be praised by the law. I, therefore, inspired by the love of divine religion, adopted male behaviour and acted as a "perfect" man,⁴⁶ thus vigorously preserving my virginity for Christ.' And saying these things, she tore from her head the dress she was wearing; and she appeared (before them) attractive in appearance with beautiful breasts;⁴⁷ and immediately covering herself up, although her clothing was torn, she said to the prefect: 'You are my father in the flesh; Claudia is my mother; these (men) who are with you now are my brothers, Avitus and Sergius. I am your daughter,

⁴⁵ The text printed by Mombricitus is evidently corrupt here (*ignorantibus ueritatem mater populi perstrepebat*); in lieu of the nonsensical *mater* I understand *murmur*.

⁴⁶ Cf. Eph. 4: 13 ('donec occurramus omnes...in virum perfectum').

⁴⁷ Bonner ('The Trial of Saint Eugenia', pp. 257–8) points out an interesting parallel to this episode in the *Fabulae* of Hyginus, c. 274, in which a certain Agnodice, a young virgin girl who wished to learn medicine, dressed herself in male clothing and shaved off her hair in order to pursue medical studies; when her medical practice, which involved the treatment of women, was called into question and she was arraigned before the judges of the Areopagus (in Athens), she revealed that she was a woman by lifting her tunic and revealing her breasts: 'quibus Agnodice tunicam alleuauit et se ostendit feminam esse'; other (male) medics began to complain of her practising, but the judges had the foresight to change the law to allow her to practise (ed. H. J. Rose, *Hygini Fabulae* (Leiden, 1967), p. 167).

Eugenia, who rejected the world with its delights for the love of Christ. Here are Protus and Hyacinthus, my eunuchs, with whom I entered the school of Christ; for Christ showed Himself so becoming to you that He presented me to you as learned and as the conqueror of desire in the sight of everyone. I believe that I shall remain forever as His follower.'

14. The father recognizes his daughter, the brothers their sister; and, running forward in full view of the people and pouring out tears, they cling to her with embraces. These things are reported to Claudia, her mother, who immediately rushes at a swift pace to the amphitheatre, together with the entire household. Clothing woven with gold is quickly produced and they dress Eugenia, though unwilling, and they raise her aloft in triumph, and the entire crowd shouts out, 'Christ is the one and true God of the Christians.' But the priests and bishops—who for a long time had remained in the vicinity of the amphitheatre together with other Christians, so that, when those who were accused had been executed, they could be buried by them—enter the amphitheatre chanting a hymn to the Lord: 'Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in its strength; your right hand has shattered the enemy.'⁴⁸ Eugenia is taken up in triumph; and so that the demonstrated proof of chastity should not seem to be missing from such a triumph, fire was seen to descend from the sky, which destroyed Melanthia with her household, and everything found in the house perished.

15. The people rejoice in the fear of God. The church which had been closed for eight years is opened. The entire Christian populace is recalled to worship. Philip the prefect is baptized with his sons. Claudia is baptized, and the entire household and a countless multitude of pagans is converted to the Lord, <Christians resume their former privileges>⁴⁹ and all Alexandria becomes as one church. But because the bishop, during the persecution, had passed to the Lord, the entire city chose Philip for the bishopric, and the holy church began to have a worthy bishop, and the state to have a worthy prefect, because no successor (to Philip) had yet arrived. Nearly the whole province of Egypt was on this occasion converted to Christ from the error of idol worship, and in all the cities churches were restored, and the prestige of the Christian name increased. But because hostile envy always pursues holy behaviour, the pagan emperors⁵⁰ <were approached by certain honourable citizens of

⁴⁸ Cf. Exod. 15: 6 in the Vulgate translation ('Dextera tua Domine magnifice in fortitudine, dextera tua Domine percussit inimicum'). The version quoted here most closely resembles that of the Itala: 'Dextera tua, Domine, honorificata est in virtute; dextera tua, Domine, confregit inimicos' (see *Vetus Latina Database*, s.v.).

⁴⁹ Whatley ('Eugenia before Ælfric', p. 361) notes that the words *suscipiunt priuilegia Christiani* were omitted by Mombritus.

⁵⁰ Who were these pagan emperors (plural)? If we recall that Eugenia went to Egypt in AD 192, and served as a monk for at least three years (c. 8), we are at least in AD 195, when Septimius Severus was emperor (193–211), and Clodius Albinus was serving with Severus as Caesar (he was

Alexandria>,⁵¹ and, as enemies of holy religion, they [the emperors] prosecuted Philip with disgusting persistence. Why say more? Perennius is sent as successor to Philip,⁵² who had accepted as his brief that he kill Philip. But when Perennius could not accomplish this—because the entire populace of the city seemed to be bound in love to Philip as if with chains—he sent to him certain people who pretended to be Christians, who on entering the church struck him down while he was reciting the Lord's Prayer. He had remained in the bishopric for one year and three months,⁵³ and he passed to Christ with the prize of his profession and his martyrdom.

16. Thereafter Eugenia buried the body of her father the martyr near Nitria,⁵⁴ where her mother Claudia had endowed a hospital.⁵⁵ Here her brothers constructed a fitting basilica, in which the Lord is worshipped up to the present day. When they had consecrated the basilica, they all return to Rome. The grace of God was propitious to them: Avitus and Sergius were joyously welcomed by the senate, such that they sent one of them to Carthage as proconsul (*proconsul*), the other as deputy (*vicarius*) to (the diocese of) Africa.⁵⁶ But Claudia and Eugenia, occupied daily in their work of divine love, gained many souls for the Lord. And when their Christian reputation flourished among matrons and virgins, one Bassilla,⁵⁷ who was a most wise and notable virgin (and was) the niece of Gallienus the Augustus,⁵⁸ came to

killed in battle at Lyon in 197). So in AD 195 there were indeed two pagan emperors. But to expect historical accuracy from this author is futile.

⁵¹ Whatley (*ibid.* pp. 361–2) notes that the words *ab honoratis aliquibus Alexandrinae ciuitatis aditi sunt* were omitted by Mombritius.

⁵² No person named Perennius is attested as prefect of Egypt (see Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (see n. 26)). The similarity of the name to that of Tigridius Perennis, who was the influential praetorian prefect of Commodus during the years 180 to 185, may be significant; on Perennis, see Howe, *The Pretorian Prefect*, pp. 65–6.

⁵³ No patriarch (bishop) of Alexandria or of *Aegyptus prima* named Philip is recorded in Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, II, pp. 581–4 [Alexandria], 591–600 [*Aegyptus prima*].

⁵⁴ Nitria (correctly Nitriai, modern Wadi Natrun in Egypt) is located some 38 miles inland from Alexandria; see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 74 (C3); it was an important monastic centre for Pachomian monks: see *DACL* II/2 [1925], cols. 3123–9 [H. Leclercq], s.v. 'Cénobitisme' (the intended article on 'Nitrie' was never written).

⁵⁵ A *xenodochium* (Greek ξενοδοχεῖον) was a guest house for the ill and the poor; see Souter, s. v., and *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. Kazhdan, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1991), III, p. 2208, s.v. 'xenodocheion'.

⁵⁶ We know from the *Notitia dignitatum* that there was a *proconsul of Africa proconsularis* (*Zeugitana*), with headquarters at Carthage; and the *vicarius* of the diocese of Africa was responsible for the provinces of Byzacena, Tripolitania, Numidia, and Mauretania (Caesariensis and Sitifensis), that is, all of North Africa west of Libya with the exception of *Africa proconsularis*; see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1453. The two brothers, in other words, were in charge of all Africa excepting only Egypt.

⁵⁷ On Bassilla (and her cemetery on the Via Salaria Vecchia), see Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'S. Bassilla', pp. 121–6, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 21–2.

⁵⁸ Gallienus was co-emperor with his father Valerian from 253 until Valerian's capture and death in Persia in 260, and sole emperor from 260 until 268; see *SHA*, 'Gallieni duo'. The

Eugenia secretly; and, hearing the words of Christian verity from the lips of Eugenia, she believed so thoroughly in Christ that she was seen as incomparable (in this respect). But because the Christian religion was prohibited by human laws, and they could not meet daily, Bassilla received Protus and Hyacinthus as a sort of gift from Eugenia;⁵⁹ in their company she did not cease from divine hymns and conversation and prayer by day or night. Then Soter, the pope of Rome,⁶⁰ a man who was holy and extremely accomplished in Christian prayer, came to Bassilla through (the recommendation of) Eugenia, and blessed her in baptism together with all those who had adopted the belief with her, and he conscientiously instructed her, such that he inflamed her with the love of Christ and even inspired her to the heights of martyrdom.

17. At that time dissension arose among the Christians, to the effect that Soter was polluting the city of Rome with his religious beliefs, and Cyprian (was polluting) Carthage. Whence it happened that Dacianus the proconsul (*proconsul*) executed Cyprian in accordance with an imperial rescript,⁶¹ but Soter escaped, because the hiding -places (provided by) many of the senatorial classes in the city of Rome protected him. At that time, when Eugenia sees Bassilla coming to her, she embraces her joyfully, and kissing her says: 'The Lord deigned to reveal to me today that you are to be graced by shedding the rosy flower of your blood in confession of Christ and, having received the palm of martyrdom, you are to travel to Christ in joy.' Hearing this Bassilla stretched out her hands and joyously gave thanks to God. And when they had prayed together and had finished their prayer they sat down. Then the blessed

essential fact about Gallienus is that he was *not* a persecutor of Christians, but in fact reversed Valerian's policy of persecution immediately on his father's death, and allowed Christians to practise their religion in peace; see L. de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus* (Leiden, 1976), esp. pp. 175–85, and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 97–105. The present account of Gallienus' persecution of Bassilla and Eugenia is therefore pure fiction.

⁵⁹ The author has fabricated the story of the transfer of the slaves Protus and Hyacinthus from the ownership of Eugenia to that of Bassilla in order to account for the fact that these eunuch martyrs were buried with Bassilla in the cemetery bearing her name (see c. 19), rather than in that of St Eugenia.

⁶⁰ Pope Soter: the dates for his pontificate given in the *Liber pontificalis* are 162–70 (Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 6). In other words, Soter's pontificate took place before Eugenia was born, and a century before the martyrdom of St Cyprian, mentioned in c. 17. The 'dissension' among the Christians refers to the Novatianist schism, established by Novatian after the election of Pope Cornelius in 251 over the question of the status of *lapsi*, that is, those who had denied their Christianity in order to escape persecution and punishment, and subsequently sought readmission and reconciliation with the Church; the Novatianists denied reconciliation to *lapsi* under any condition.

⁶¹ Cyprian was executed under Valerian and Gallienus, after trial in Carthage before the proconsul Galerius Maximus, on 14 September 258, a century later than the pontificate of Soter (see the *Acta proconsularia Cypriani* [BHL 2037], ed. Bastiaensen, *Acti e passioni dei martiri*, pp. 214–16). The proconsul Dacianus is therefore fictitious; but the name was one much favoured by authors of these fictitious *passiones* as the name of a persecuting governor, particularly in Spanish hagiography; cf. De Gaiffier, 'Sub Daciano praeside'.

Bassilla said to Eugenia: 'As I gaze on the glory of both our crowns (of martyrdom), I realize that we came to understand this through God's revelation. For Christ revealed to me the outcome of things concerning you, just as He revealed it to you concerning me. For I saw and understood that a double palm (of glory) awaits you in heaven: one which you acquired in Alexandria in the struggle for your virginity, the other which you are to receive now for the shedding of your blood.' Hearing these things Eugenia is similarly overjoyed; and, rejoicing and summoning all the virgins whom she had acquired through the very glory of unimpaired chastity, she asks them to pour out a prayer with her; when they had finished this, she began to address them in these words: 'Behold, here is the time of the vintage in which the ripe grapes are to be harvested. And you, who are the offshoots of my vine and the grape-clusters of my bowels, be ready and vigilant and outstanding. For virginity is primary: it is the index of virtue, revealing itself as similar to the life of angels, (it is) the companion of holiness, the guide to joy. And therefore, my dear virgins, remain resolutely with me in love of God during this trial of virginity itself, so that you will be able to possess eternal joys with utter delight. I commend you to the Holy Spirit, because I believe that He will re-establish you chaste and unimpaired in His Kingdom. From this time forth do not seek my person in its bodily form, but, keeping my example before your eyes, embrace my admonitions in your hearts.' And kissing them (goodbye), she urged them with admonitions of this sort to be of resolute determination.

18. When they had completed their prayer, Bassilla and Eugenia departed; and behold, one of Bassilla's slave-girls went that same day to Pompeius, and said to him: 'Do you know that your betrothed—my mistress—has been persuaded by Eugenia to refuse to join with you in matrimony?' On hearing this Pompeius is incensed, and he goes to the room in which Bassilla, together with Protus and Hyacinthus, was occupied in hymns and prayers. And when he asked to be admitted, he hears the orders given to him by Bassilla: 'You know that you have no reason at all for seeing me.' He departs sad and worried, and sends various matrons to Bassilla as if to persuade her to accept him as her husband. As they are trying to persuade her and are arguing vigorously, she addresses them with these words: 'There is this difference between wise persons and fools: that fools are revealed because they do not reject evil nor seek good; but wise persons seek good in such a way that they strive (always) to achieve something better. If it is good that I accept as my husband a mortal man, how much better is it that I do not refuse to accept my immortal creator? Let him [Pompeius] be pleased, therefore, and let him rejoice, that I preferred God alone to his love, and that I sought faithfully to preserve (my body) undefiled for Him Who entrusted my undefiled body to me. For I see that all the joys of this present life are fettered by the chains of a sudden end, and that, declining in various ways, they begin to advance

towards this end as soon as temporal joys are hidden from view, and, like the appearance of a flowering meadow, all things which are in flower (soon begin to) fade. Rather, removing their hopes from mortal man, let them trust in the Almighty, who sent his only-begotten Son to the world so that He could show us what we ought truly to love. For in observing this sincere, unpolluted, and unimpaired love, none of you should pretend to be ignorant of Whom I love. He is the only-begotten Son of the living God, Who, coming to us through a Virgin, Himself remained a virgin. He entered into the womb of a Virgin as God; He is born as man; He is anointed to be adored as if a king; He teaches like a master, He conquers as one omnipotent, is sold like a slave, is regarded like a prophet, suffers like a criminal, dies like a man, is resurrected like the Lord, and with many witnesses observing Him He ascends into heaven.' As Bassilla said these things, nearly all the matrons were fired with love of Christ, such that, if it were possible, none of them wished to return home.

19. And so none of them dared to give an answer to Pompeius. Accordingly, Gallienus the Augustus decreed to Pompeius that either Bassilla accept him as husband or she would be executed by sword; and he ordered that Eugenia was either to do homage to the omnipotent gods or was to die cruelly. And he issued a general edict: that any Christian whatsoever who refused to sacrifice to the idols would be especially punished.⁶² Meanwhile Bassilla agreed to receive Pompeius her betrothed, and for many days she was assailed from all sides by various arguments: on one side, the matrons and others, on the other, the virgins; then the neighbours and close relatives, and then the old women, whose custom was to argue wantonly for what they desired. Why say more? She vigorously resisted all these, and revealed inflexibly the result of her perseverance. But because she was of imperial stock, and could not be tried in public, she was transfixed by a sword in her own house, for the love of her virginity and of Christ.⁶³ When she had been killed, Protus and Hyacinthus are arrested and are ordered to sacrifice to Jupiter. But

⁶² This is historical nonsense: no such edict was ever promulgated by Gallienus, who was not a persecutor of Christians (see n. 57), and under his reign Christians and bishops were allowed to recover property which had been confiscated during Valerian's persecution. Christianity was recognized as a lawful religion, whence Christians were allowed to live in peace from his reign until the outbreak of the 'Great Persecution' in 303.

⁶³ It is odd that the narrator omits to mention that Bassilla was buried in the cemetery which bears her name on the Via Salaria Vecchia, the *coemeterium Bassillae* (later known as the 'cemetery of Hermes'); see Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'S. Bassilla'. On the cemetery itself, see L. Spera, 'Bassillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, I, pp. 211–14; the likelihood is that Bassilla is the name of the foundress of the cemetery, and that the martyr's name has supplanted that of the foundress: see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 21–2. The martyrdom of Bassilla is recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* against 22 September, but is assigned to the period of the 'Great Persecution' rather than the reign of Gallienus, as here: 'Bassilla, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian' [= AD 304] (Appendix I, p. 636).

refusing (to do this), they undergo various tortures and, persevering, were both decapitated.⁶⁴

20. After this Eugenia is arrested, and is ordered by Decius, the urban prefect,⁶⁵ to offer sacrifice to Diana. Standing before the temple [of Diana],⁶⁶ Eugenia poured out prayers with her hands stretched out; and while she was praying, the statue of Diana shattered into fragments, so that only dust remained as witness to its existence. Then, as if she were possessed of magic arts, she is ordered to be bound and cast into the Tiber. As soon as she was thrown in, the chains together with the stone burst asunder; and the blessed Eugenia is borne along, sitting on the water, with only her knees beneath the water. On seeing this all the people were astonished, and there was great joy among the Christians: for they believed that He was with Eugenia in the river, as He had been with Peter on the Sea (of Galilee), so that she would not sink.⁶⁷ Then she is thrown into the furnaces beneath the Baths of Severinus (*thermae*

⁶⁴ Again, it is odd that the narrator omits to mention that Protus and Hyacinthus were buried in the cemetery of Bassilla on the Via Salaria Vecchia. On their presence here, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 261–3; Cecchelli, 'Sulla traslazione dei martiri Proto e Giacinto', pp. 645–59; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 24–6. We know from the *Depositio martyrum* that the burial here of St Protus was recorded against 11 September (Appendix I, p. 636), and both martyrs' presence in this cemetery was recorded in an epigram by Damasus (see Appendix II (t), p. 648). Strikingly, the tomb of Hyacinthus was identified by Giuseppe Marchi in 1845 by its inscription: YACINTHVS MARTYR; and Marchi was able to establish that Hyacinthus had been executed by being burned alive (see p. 231 and nn. 10–12). It is also worth mentioning that, according to Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* [CPG 1899], a eunuch named Hyacinthus, who is said to have been a (Christian) priest, was engaged as the teacher of Marcia, the beloved of the emperor Commodus: ix. 10 and 12 (ed. P. Wendland, *Hippolytus Werke*, III, GCS XXVI (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 247–8); see discussion by Guyot, *Eunuchen as Sklaven und Freigelassene*, pp. 210–11. It will be recalled that the beginning of the present *passio* is situated during the principate of Commodus, and that the eunuch Hyacinthus is one of two companions involved in the education of Eugenia (c. 2). Could knowledge of this historical Hyacinthus have prompted the invention of the fictional martyr Hyacinthus?

⁶⁵ There is no record of any urban prefect named Decius at this time (see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, p. 123, and the list of urban prefects in the 'Chronographer of 354', MGH, AA IX, pp. 65–6); the name was apparently suggested by that of the emperor Decius (249–51), a notorious persecutor of Christians.

⁶⁶ The ancient temple of Diana (*aedes Dianae*) was located on the Aventine (which accordingly is referred to in some sources as the *collis Dianae*), near to the present-day church of S. Prisca; see Platner–Ashby, pp. 149–50, and Richardson, pp. 108–9, with fig. 14, as well as Delcourt, 'Le complexe de Diane', p. 33 (who makes no attempt to identify the temple of Diana in question), and L. Venditelli, 'Diana Aventina, Aedes', *LTUR* II, pp. 11–13. Cf. also the *passio* of Pope Urban, where Urban is decapitated at a temple of Diana, probably, in this case, located at the third or fourth mile of the Via Appia (see XXX.15), on which see Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 284 (Unità Topografica 486: *templum Dianae*), and *eadem*, 'Dianae templum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 199–200.

⁶⁷ St Peter walking on the waters of the Sea of Galilee: Matt. 14: 28–31; and understanding *hunc* [i.e. Christ] and *qui* in lieu of Mombritius' *hoc* and *quod* in the sentence, 'Credebant enim hoc esse cum Eugenia in flumine quod in mari erat cum Petro, ne mergeretur.'

Severinae),⁶⁸ which similarly were immediately extinguished, such that the baths themselves could no longer be heated at all. Then she is put into a dark prison; being denied food or drink for twenty days, she grew weak, since she could not see the light at all. But such brilliant light shone there daily, as if the place were in open daylight, that for twenty days the blessed Eugenia stood there as if she were giving off the light herself. Accompanied by this immense light the Saviour appeared to her in the dark cell, and restoring and comforting her daily, said to her: 'Do not fear, Eugenia: I am Your Saviour, for Whom you have always preserved your entire and unalloyed devotion. I shall take you up to heaven on the same day as I came down to earth.' On that same Christmas day an executioner was sent, who killed her in the prison cell.

21. Then her body was taken up by the Christians (and) buried not far from Rome on the road which is called the Via Latina.⁶⁹ While Claudia her mother was weeping at her grave, Eugenia appeared to her as she was keeping vigil there, and said to her: 'Rejoice, Claudia my mother, because Christ introduced me to the joys of the saints, and placed my father among the rejoicing of the patriarchs. He will receive you too into eternal peace this coming Sunday. Recommend to your sons, my brothers, that they guard the sign of the Cross, through which they will be found worthy to become our partners here.' It happened that Claudia, returning home, instructed her sons in accordance with the instructions which had been given to her. On the (following) Sunday, after celebrating mass, she gave up her spirit while engaged in prayer. Her sons buried her near their sister. They began to be so accomplished in their fear of God that they converted the minds of many pagans (to Christianity). In the event, they took with their preaching many men from the Capitol as they were

⁶⁸ The corrupt form of the name of these baths given by Mombricitus—*thermarum seuerinarum*—suggests identification with the baths constructed by Septimius Severus (*thermae Severianae*), as recorded in *SHA*, 'Severus', xix. 5: see G. De Spirito, 'Thermae Severianae', *LTUR* V, pp. 64–5. On the *Thermae Severianae*, see Platner–Ashby, p. 532, Richardson, p. 395, and N. Pollard, 'Thermae Severianae', *LTUR* V, p. 64. No trace of these Severan baths, which were probably located to the south of the baths of Caracalla, remains today. However, the corrupt form of the transmitted name may also raise the possibility that the baths which the author had in mind were the *thermae Suranae*, built by Licinius Sura, a contemporary of Trajan, on the Aventine adjacent to the temple of Diana: see L. Venditelli, 'Thermae Surae / Suranae', *LTUR* V, p. 65. Recall that St Eugenia had destroyed the idol of Diana (before being herself cast into the Tiber).

⁶⁹ Two seventh-century pilgrim itineraries—the *Notitia ecclesiarum* and the *De locis sanctis martyrum*—refer to the church and burial of St Eugenia on the Via Latina (see Appendix IV (a) [§7] and (b) [§7]); and this church was apparently still standing in the late eighth century when it was refurbished by Pope Hadrian I (772–95): see Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 166. The location of the cemetery in question remained unknown until it was rediscovered by Enrico Josi in 1937 at the second mile of the Via Latina; from the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX) we know that the founder of this cemetery was one Apronianus: see D. Nuzzo, 'Aproniani cymiterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, I, pp. 141–3. On the church of St Eugenia, which stood above the cemetery, see A. Augenti, 'Eugeniae basilica, monasterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, II, pp. 226–7, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 132–3.

preparing to sacrifice, and led them to church; when they had been purified by baptism, the divine hall received them into its bosom; and, inflicting daily damages on the devil, they lived for many years in Christ; and with their good progress in life, they passed from this light to the sidereal kingdom, confessing the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

X

SS. Chrysanthus and Daria

c.475 × 500; relevant to the cemetery of Thrason (Via Salaria Nuova) and the cemetery of Hilaria (Via Salaria Nuova)

The *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria is, like several earlier *passiones* (nos. IV, VIII, IX) principally intended as a vehicle for a diatribe against the pagan gods and in favour of virginity and celibacy within marriage; like them, it is constructed as an ‘epic *passio*’, in which the two principal actors succeed in converting increasing numbers of Christians who, like them, go cheerfully to martyrdom.¹ The story as narrated in the present *passio* concerns Chrysanthus, the son of a wealthy and very distinguished senator (*illustrissimus*) named Polemius, who, during the principate of Numerian (283–4) comes from Alexandria to Rome in order to take up a seat in the senate, bringing Chrysanthus with him (c. 2). Chrysanthus is formidably well instructed in liberal learning, especially philosophy, but his craving for knowledge, aroused by his reading of the gospels, takes him to the priest Carpophorus, by whom he is baptized (c. 3). Polemius soon learns of this and, fearing scandal, locks Chrysanthus up in a foul room (c. 4); but friends of Polemius persuade him that the way to proceed is to surround Chrysanthus with beautiful young women, who can be expected to turn his thoughts away from Christ (cc. 5–7). But when this procedure fails spectacularly, the advisers of Polemius advise sending an even more beautiful young Vestal Virgin, named Daria, to talk him out of his Christian belief and to marry him (c. 8). Chrysanthus and Daria engage in a lengthy debate on the merits of the pagan gods (cc. 9–13); but inevitably Chrysanthus persuades Daria to convert to Christianity; they agree to get married but to preserve their virginity as a ‘married’ couple (c. 14). As eloquent virgins they preach the virtues of virginity to the Roman people, causing many to abandon their wives and husbands, and this results in a public outcry, which causes the two virgins to be brought to the attention of Celerinus, the urban prefect; Celerinus first hands Chrysanthus over to his

¹ Listed *BHL* 1787 and *CPL* 2171a; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 226–7; *DACL* III/1, cols. 1560–8 [P. Allard]; *BSS* IV, cols. 300–6 [M. C. Celletti]; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 138–48; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 50–5.

tribune, a soldier named Claudius, so that he can be made to sacrifice or else be tortured (c. 15). Claudius and a brigade of seventy soldiers apply various tortures to Chrysanthus, but they all fail (cc. 16–19); the result of their failure is that Claudius and all his soldiers are converted to Christianity, whereupon they are arrested and executed on Numerian's orders (c. 20). The widow of Claudius, a woman named Hilaria, is arrested while recovering the bodies of her husband and sons, and she too dies while under arrest (c. 21). Meanwhile, Chrysanthus is remanded in custody to a foul holding cell in the Mamertine prison (c. 22). Daria is placed in a house of prostitution; but a lion, which has escaped from the amphitheatre, enters her cell, and acts as a loyal (and no doubt terrifying) watchdog, keeping away from her all would-be suitors, and eventually, through Daria's prayers, escaping to freedom (cc. 23–5). Numerian soon hears of this and has both of them taken out on the Via Salaria (Nuova) and buried alive in a sandpit (*arenarium*) which serves, in effect, as an underground cemetery or catacomb (c. 26). Many people come to visit their tomb and, on the orders of Numerian, they too are buried alive (c. 27).

The earliest phases of the cult of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria are obscure. Their martyrdoms are not recorded in fourth-century sources, such as the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I), and no genuine epigram of Damasus has ever been found (Appendix II). The fact that their martyrdom is commemorated on 29 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* ('Rome, <in the cemetery> of Thrason, Saturninus, Chrysanthus, Daria, Maurus and others' (Appendix III, p. 657)) suggests that their cult had become established during the course of the fifth century. During the sixth century, after their tomb had been devastated and then refurbished, Pope Vigilius (537–55) commissioned the following epigram to mark their tomb:

Two names here keep this (one) tomb for matching prayers:
 the glory of Chrysanthus and Daria is to be revered once again,
 when, after the tomb had been abandoned, barbaric fury
 sought booty among the tombs of the saints.
 Now these (tombs) rise up again through the contributions of the poor,
 but will be more pleasing to God through the wealth of their prayers.
 Savage people: lament your wickedness; your rage has passed,
 a beauty grows in these shrines as the result of your depredations.²

The 'barbaric fury' (*effera rabies*) of the 'savage people' (*gens saeva*) which devastated the tomb of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria presumably refers to the sack of Rome by Vitigis and the Goths in 537, when they were encamped in the region of the Via Salaria Nuova. At the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours visited the tomb after its refurbishment, and, after briefly mentioning

² Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 187–8 (no. 45); Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 165–6.

their martyrdom in words which manifestly derive from the present *passio*, described the appearance of the tomb itself:

A wall divided the place; on one side the tombs of the martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria were separated, on the other side the bodies of the other saints were placed in one tomb. But the builder left an open window in this wall that had been placed in the middle, so that a panorama was available for viewing the bodies of the saints.³

The provision of a small window (*fenestella*), through which pilgrims could view the tomb of the martyrs without touching it, is a characteristic feature of many martyr tombs. In any case, in the following century, the three seventh-century pilgrim itineraries record the presence of either a church or a tomb in their name on the Via Salaria Nuova (Appendix IV (a) [§3], (b) [§11], and (c) [§4], pp. 660, 664, 665, respectively); and their feast-day (29 November) is commemorated in the 'Gelasian Sacramentary' (Appendix V (c), p. 670), but not in the 'Verona' or Gregorian sacramentaries.

It was long suspected that the Greek version of the *passio* (BHG 313) was composed first, and that the Latin text (BHL 1787) was a translation from the Greek; but more recent scholarship has conclusively demonstrated the priority of the Latin version.⁴ One of the principal arguments in favour of the priority of the Latin text is its author's thorough familiarity with the institutions and topography of Rome. Thus he refers to the Roman Curia (c. 2), to cemeteries on the Via Salaria (Nuova), including those of Hilaria (c. 21) and Thrason (c. 26), as well as to the Tullian prison (c. 22), which he refers to by its ancient name (*carcer Tullianus*) rather than the name which became common in Late Latin hagiography (*carcer Mamertinus*). By the same token, he reveals a thorough familiarity with the Latin verse of Vergil and Ovid (cc. 10–11). All these features indicate that the present *passio* was composed in Latin by an author familiar with Rome and its institutions.

Of the numerous Latin *passiones* which have been preserved, and with the exception of those composed by Arnobius the Younger (nos. III and IV), this present *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria stands out for the learning of its author, and the elegance of his Latin (always bearing in mind that both of the available printed texts are unsatisfactory, and that we can never be sure that we have precisely what the author originally wrote: see below). The deployment of rhetorical devices, particularly in the protracted debate between Chrysanthus and Daria in cc. 8–13, is articulate and impressive, as is the range of sources—biblical, classical, and patristic—laid under contribution. Whereas most of the authors of these *passiones* appear to have been local clerics with only modest

³ Gregory, *In gloria martyrum*, c. 37 (ed. MGH, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* 1/2, pp. 61–2; trans. R. Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs*, TTH 3 (Liverpool, 1988), p. 59).

⁴ See Noret, 'La Passion de Chrysanthé et Darie'.

training in Latin, the author of the present work reveals that some at least of them may have had access to higher education in the later fifth century, when the work was probably composed.

Text. The *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria is attested in a substantial number of manuscripts, dating from c.800 onwards;⁵ but very few of these manuscripts have ever been collated, with the result that no satisfactory edition exists. Two editions are available: that by Mombritius (I, pp. 271–8), and that in an October volume of the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum* (Oct. XI [1861], pp. 469–84).⁶ In general I have followed the text of Mombritius, correcting it where necessary, often, but not reliably often, by comparison with the text in *ActaSS*. The chapter numbering is that of the Bollandists.

1. God wished that the history of earlier saints would come (to bear) on our instruction, not so that the praise of mortals would feed them, whom He feeds with immortal banquets, but so that He could teach us through their example to scorn the blandishments of this present world and, as we struggle⁷ to acquire everlasting glory, not to fear transient and momentary distress. For all pain is either mild, and can be tolerated; or else it is severe, and imposes its own terminus.⁸ But if either (world) is to be feared, it is reasonable that, in order to proceed to the one which is eternal, this one is to be scorned. For if these pains, which are inflamed today and tomorrow grow cool, which decrease today and tomorrow are nullified, which arise today and are ended tomorrow: how fearful and savage and serious are those reckoned to be which begin thus and increase daily, which have such a beginning that they cannot end at all? Those (people), who allow themselves either to be cut open by physicians, or burned by cauteries, or fed bitter potions, have this perception: they are terrified by their fear of death, so they seek bitter experiences and do not fear fire and are not afraid of the iron (scalpel). If, therefore, for love of this life—which does not know how to keep the faith for those who love it—the pains of fire and sorrow are purchased with gold, one must take pleasure in spontaneous sufferings, which, arriving gratuitously, make us temporarily humble so that we may be raised up in perpetuity; they make us experience momentary sorrow so that we may receive everlasting delights. They create heat of transient fires for us, so that they can make us participants in everlasting coolness. With this same perception all Christ's martyrs, so that

⁵ *BHLms* lists nearly a hundred for *BHL* 1787, and Cécile Lanéry lists a further thirty ('Hagiographie', pp. 141–2).

⁶ The Bollandists (under *BHL* 1787) cite a further edition, by J. Floss, in the *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 20 (1869), 156–70; but I have not used this; it is accessible at <https://archive.org/details/AnnalenDesHistorischenVereinsFrDenNiederrheinVolume201869>.

⁷ Reading *laborantes* for *labentes* (*ActaSS*) and *labentem* (Mombritius).

⁸ This sentence has been adapted from the *passio* of St Sebastian (III. 21): 'For this pain is either light, and can be borne patiently, or it is severe, and offers the aforementioned end after a glorious struggle'.

they could seize victory from their enemies, experienced all kinds of suffering by laughing at them rather than fearing them, believing both that they would acquire everlasting glory by rejecting temporary renown, and that they would escape the eternal fire by suffering present burning. Let us also, in our delight at their glory, reject the world with all its amusements, and let us retell the deeds of saints with a calm mind and without a shadow of disbelief, namely the history of Chrysanthus and Daria, which will as much be beneficial to us, who are (already) believers, as it will be profitable to all those who are to become believers in the future.

2. Polemius, an illustrious senator (*illustrissimus*) honoured in the city of Alexandria, came to Rome with his son Chrysanthus and was received into the Roman senate, and, enriched with great honours by the emperor Numinian,⁹ he took up a seat in the Roman Curia (*Curia Romana*).¹⁰ When he had instructed his only son, Chrysanthus, in all liberal studies, he passed him on to study with the philosophers. Chrysanthus was a young man of burning intelligence, such that whatever was taught him by rhetoricians or philosophers, he retained powerfully in his capacious mind. As to what his wisdom and intelligence was like, the outcome of events reveals. For when he had eagerly investigated with his mind an entire library of books, he came to the text of the gospels. And, fixing the course of his curiosity, he says to himself: 'For how long was it seemly for you, O Chrysanthus, to let loose the reins of your cares on the darkness of books, in order for you to arrive at the light of truth? It is not (a mark) of wisdom, that we return to the shadows from the light. We are losing what we struggle (to acquire), if we lose the fruit of our labours. For this is the fruit of our labour: that we read what was given by God to those seeking (Him). We read that God had given this command to men: "Seek and ye shall find".'¹¹ Just as we sought, so we found. If we give up, we are

⁹ Numinian was the son of emperor Carus; he was made Caesar in 282 and died in mysterious circumstances in late 284 in Bithynia; he was succeeded by Diocletian. See *SHA*, 'Carus et Carinus et Numinianus', cc. 11–12; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 38 (trans. Bird, pp. 40–1). The historical Numinian never set foot in Rome, but spent most of his brief principate on campaign in Persia. There is no evidence that he was a persecutor of Christians, certainly not in the West.

¹⁰ The *Curia Romana* is probably *not* to be identified with the senate house known as the *Curia Iulia*, which is still standing (after surviving the Middle Ages by being turned into the church of S. Adriano in the seventh century, and after much restoration during the nineteenth century) in the Forum; see Platner–Ashby, pp. 143–5; Richardson, pp. 103–4; and E. Tortorici, 'Curia Iulia', *LTUR* I, pp. 332–4), but with the less well-known *Curia senati in palatio Neronis*: see M. C. Cartocci, 'Curia Romana', *LTUR* I, p. 335, and D. Palombi, 'Curia in Palatio', *ibid.* p. 334, who points out that the reference to a *Curia in palatio* in ancient sources such as Tacitus and Cassius Dio is possibly not to a specific building or location, but simply to a meeting of the senate, perhaps in the temple of Magna Mater or in that of Iuppiter Stator, or in the emperor's palace on the Palatine (on which see D. L. Thompson, 'The Meetings of the Roman Senate on the Palatine', *American Journal of Archaeology* 85 (1981), 335–9, at 339).

¹¹ Matt. 7: 7, Luke 11: 9.

to be compared to fools and idiots. Let us therefore hold to what ought to be retained in the mind, and let us abandon all things which are to be rejected. For a loss of my laborious investigation results, if I do not hold on forcefully to what I have found. I struggled a long time in my search: I found gold, I found silver, I found precious stones. If I sought so that I would discover, I found so that I would retain; I will not now allow what I have found to be snatched from me: I shall retain it, use it, and benefit from it, for this is the summit of my labour; if I abandon it, I will be seen to have lived without a reason, to have sought without a reason.'

3. And in saying this, he began to look for someone who could be an interpreter of divine letters. And just as he had (previously) listened to teachers who were grammarians and rhetoricians, so he (now) desired to acquire teachers who were peasants and fishermen. For he had read that the apostle (Paul) said: 'Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the investigator of this world?'¹² And because the world was unsatisfactory in its wise men, it pleased God through its fools, such that He would save those who believed in Him. Turning these things over daily in his mind, and, enquiring of the servants of Christ each day, there came one who said: 'Do you know a certain Carpophorus by name?—a Christian man who is learned in every respect, and holy, but because of the atrocity of persecution which is raging (everywhere), he is holed up in a cave in a mountain, and can be visited only by very few of the faithful.' On hearing this Chrysanthus began to be even more fervent (in his faith) and, pouring out prayers on bended knees, he sought with his tears to be found worthy to come to his notice. What he was seeking through the desire of his faith came about through God's providence. And, after coming to the saintly Carpophorus, a priest of heavenly sanctity, within a few months he is trained in all divine letters; and he began to be instructed so soundly that, within seven days of his baptism, he was preaching Jesus Christ the Son of God in public.

4. Then his neighbours, powerful men of senatorial rank, taking aside his father Polemius, began to upbraid him by saying: 'This young man is a danger to your patrimony and to your own head: he bawls with various cries against our gods and goddesses, and says that some Christ is the true God. If the emperor were to hear him carrying on like this, there could be no decision (favourable) to you or to us. Who would dare to venture such things, except someone who believed he could go unpunished outside Roman law?' Then in a rage Polemius, his father, had him shut up in a dark and filthy place, and had him fed in the evenings on a tiny bit of food. Chrysanthus, the man of God, said that this was inflicted on him more as an exercise than as a punishment. And when this became a matter of public discussion, one of those in the

¹² I Cor. 1: 20.

audience said to his father: 'If you are seeking to tear your son away from this behaviour, occupy him instead with pleasures and delights, and hand him over in marriage to some elegant and wise young woman, so that, as he is learning to become a husband, he will forget about being a Christian. For these shadows and afflictions which you think are inflicting punishment on him, the Christians think will result in praise and perpetual glory for him.'

5. On hearing this Polemius ordered couches to be laid with silken coverings, and taking him [Chrysanthus] from that squalid and foul dwelling-place, clothed him in precious garments. Then, placing him in the dining-room, he chose five beautiful virgins from among his slave-girls, and he dressed them in elaborate clothing and jewellery, and, standing them in front of Chrysanthus, he ordered that they be presented with extremely rich banquets on a daily and continual (basis). He threatened the girls, saying: 'Unless you prise him away from his Christian intentions with your charms and embraces, I shall have you killed with various tortures.' During all this wantonness the man of God remained immobile, and scorned their advances as if they were excrement. He recoiled from these virgin girls as if they were vipers. He lay there immobile in prayer, and, receiving their embraces and kisses like arrow-shots with the shield of his faith, he cried out to the Lord, saying:

6. 'Rise up, O Lord, to assist me; say to my soul, "I am your salvation".¹³ Who can prevail to win this battle stirred up by the devil, unless Your right hand wage war on his behalf? He errs, who thinks he can obtain complete chastity from his own behaviour; for unless bodily flames are extinguished by Your downpour, the mind cannot arrive at where it is going.¹⁴ Desire is a wicked beast, which is stirred up by the flesh and the devil to devour souls in the forest of this world. Whoever escapes its bite should give thanks to You, O God, because it is through Your (gift) that he escapes. Just as your blessed servant Joseph, whose father bewailed him saying, "A wicked beast devoured him. A beast devoured Joseph",¹⁵ and he did not wish to be consoled at all for that. Certainly this Jacob is your servant, O Lord from Whom nothing lies hidden. Why, therefore, when his sons said to him, "Look to see if this is your son's coat",¹⁶ did You not reveal to him that they had deceived him? But You concealed (the truth), because You foresaw that the father would address the patriarchs in a prophetic speech. And so a wicked beast ran up to him, and like a lioness tore at him with its claws; and, what is worse, it lay in ambush for him, so that it could find him on his own. But he was not alone, because he had already been summoned by his father's tears. And so You permitted him

¹³ Ps. 34: 3.

¹⁴ This is a relatively straightforward allusion to Augustine's views on the necessity of God's grace to achieve salvation (as against the view of the Semi-Pelagians, for whom personal striving and will were sufficient to attain salvation, a view which pervades the *passiones* composed by Arnobius the Younger (above, nos. III and IV)).

¹⁵ Gen. 37: 33.

¹⁶ Gen. 37: 32.

[the father] to lament, and to emit moans from the depth of his heart, so that You could comfort him with Your assistance. Now that wicked beast was sexual desire, through which the devil and womankind were struggling against him. There is flesh and blood, there is youth and attractive appearance; there is puberty and temptation for the eyes; there is the power of domination; there is delight in wantonness; there are the invitations to power; there are adornments attracting the eyes; there is the head decked out with gold and jewels; there is the scent of perfumes; there the embrace is close to devouring and death. Amidst all these things the lioness found him alone, and seized him. Your hand, O Lord, placed before his mouth, freed him; whence Jacob said to those who were announcing that his son Joseph was still alive: "It is a wonder to me, if Joseph my son is living"¹⁷—as if he were to say, "It is a wonder to me if he escaped from that wicked beast so that he could live." But he did escape, and lived. Why? Because he said, "God was with Joseph",¹⁸ and he blessed everything which God had done in his [Joseph's] hands. And I, O Lord, make my confession, and pray for Your help against these vipers, that like serpents they may fall asleep on hearing the voice of the snake-charmer: may these (slave-girls) fall asleep in my sight, and not arouse in me the war of desire, because I have learned that You are the true Lord, Who exercise Your power, which cannot be conquered, in all those who believe in You.'

7. Therefore, when Chrysanthus had finished his prayer, the virgins were so overcome with heavy sleep that, if they had not been thrown out of the dining-room, they could not have been awakened at all. They stayed awake outside, and ate their meal. But immediately as they were taken back inside to where Chrysanthus was praying, they were oppressed with heavy sleep. These things are reported to his father by those to whom the care of Chrysanthus had been assigned; and he started to weep as if (his son) was already dead. Then one of his friends said to him: 'He learned this magic spell from the Christians, and was easily able to use this (means of) enchantment against these simple girls. But if you were to send some accomplished young woman to him, she could incline him to your will and to her own desires.' Polemius says to him: 'And where am I to find such a woman, who could do these things?' His friend replied to him: 'Among the virgins who serve the goddess Vesta there is a virgin attractive beyond all beauty, and so wise that even the orators themselves do not resist her. Her appearance shows that she has already reached marriageable age, and it will be necessary for some nobleman to obtain her as his wife. Let us gain her (support) through supplication, as is the custom, and negotiate with her so that she may restore your son to you, and take him as her husband.' All things necessary to this plan were done, and the consent of the virgin is obtained.

¹⁷ Gen. 45: 28.

¹⁸ Gen. 39: 21.

8. Then the virgin of Vesta, named Daria, radiant with gold and jewels, goes in calmly to Chrysanthus, like a radiant sun. And she addresses him with such verbal eloquence by way of consolation, and applies such great skill of intelligence that, if he had been harder than iron, he would have been rendered softer than lead. But Chrysanthus, sustained¹⁹ by the Lord's assistance, repelled the arrows of the devil with the shield of faith. And, requesting the Holy Spirit to (stand) in the middle between him and her, he made this beginning to his speech: 'If you show such great elegance of beauty to me, a mortal man, in the hope of temporal marriage, and reveal such great sweetness of honeyed speech, that you believe you can call my mind, occupied with other loves, back from the purpose of its commitment, and compel my heart to wish for what it does not wish, how much more could you acquire as your lover the immortal Son of the King, if you so wished? For if you were to keep your soul for Him in the purity of your body and, just as you are beautiful in body, you will be more beautiful in spirit; and just as you gleam outwardly with gold and jewels, so you will be adorned inwardly in your innermost being. The angels will be your proxies, the archangels will be your panegyrists, the apostles will be your bridesmen, the martyrs your friends, Christ your bridegroom, Who will construct a bridal chamber in heaven for you, decorated with pearls. He will hand over to you the possessions of Paradise, He will give you an everlasting dowry. He will establish for you incomparable returns and will renew in you the flower of most welcome youth.'

9. Daria, touched, replied to these (remarks): 'O young man of impudent spirit, I brought with me to you no battle standards (*signa*) with this attire: but, having pity on your father's tears, I seek to restore you both to your father and to the worship of the gods.' Chrysanthus (said) to her: 'If you know anything which reason will reveal as true, I shall give it my attention and listen carefully, so that, in this reciprocal conversation, you may listen and speak freely.' Daria replied: 'Among all those things which we acknowledge to be necessary to the human condition, I know nothing to be so useful and so devout as to worship the divinity, and not to arouse the divine powers of the gods to anger through our contempt.' Chrysanthus said to this: 'O wise virgin: what worship do you think we ought to devote to idols?' Daria replied: 'That which makes them our guardians.' Chrysanthus says: 'How can they be our guardians, who, unless they are (themselves) guarded by dogs, will be stolen at night by thieves? And, so that they are not pulled down on impulse, are fixed in place with iron and leaden chains?' Daria replies: 'If the humble populace could celebrate the worship of gods without these images, there would be no need of showing

¹⁹ Reading *fretus* (*ActaSS.*) rather than *fertur* (*Mombritius*).

their likeness. These images are (made) in bronze and marble; they are cast in gold and silver, so that the worshipper can consider with his mind (the god) whom he is taught to worship and fear.’ Chrysanthus (said) to her: ‘Let us therefore investigate whose images these are, and let us see if we ought deservedly to show them the honour of our worship. For God cannot be contemplated or believed except as One Who is superior to all other holiness and majesty.’

10. ‘What good (qualities), therefore, did that villain Saturn have, who killed his children as soon as they were born?²⁰ Whence I shall not say “ate”—as his worshippers write!²¹ What good (qualities) do you think there were in Jupiter who, for as many days as he lived, committed the same number of unspeakable (acts of) incest, of adultery, of homicide? He was the castrator of his father, the violator of children, the defiler of married women, the husband of his sisters, the usurper of dominion, the discoverer of sorcerers, the arbitrator of transformations, the accumulator of demons, the plotter of death, and the perpetrator of all crimes.²² Would you really think that such (a being) is a god, if there were no writings about him by those (persons) through whose testimony gods are remembered and kings born? Yet they are remembered as being dead at a period when simple men thought men were gods, whom they had found to be mighty in battle. For what could be divine in Jupiter, who was so much the enemy of all chastity up to his death, that he polluted the air itself with Ganymede,²³ and, as I said, defiled the earth with his filth. What do you think has been fostered by way of divinity in Mercury, whose normal appearance is that of a deceitful monster, when we see hair and feathers on his crown—except for the sole fact that he is to be adored as a living god? He discovered money which had been hidden in the ground through his wickedness, and in his incantations he calmed the anger of serpents. He managed to do this with

²⁰ Perhaps the most extensive denunciation of the sins of the pagan gods is that by Prudentius in his reply to Symmachus: *Contra Symmachum* i. 42–144; but the topos is found in numerous Christian authors.

²¹ The story of Cronos eating his children as they were born, in response to a prophecy that he was to be overthrown by his own son, was familiar in Greek poets such as Homer and Pindar but is not, to my knowledge, retailed by a Latin poet with reference to Saturn (the Latin name of Cronos); see J. March, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 139–40.

²² Many of Jupiter’s children were born outside his marriage with Juno, his wife and sister. Ovid refers to some of those fathered on goddesses in his *Metamorphoses*, e.g. the birth of Mercury by Maia (i. 669), Proserpina by Ceres (v. 515, vi. 114), the Nine Muses by Mnemosyne (vi. 114), Venus by Dione (xiv. 585), etc.; the number of offspring fathered by Jupiter on mortal women is countless. See Hyginus, *Fabulae*, cc. 155 (‘Iovis filii’) and 226 (‘Quae mortales cum Iove concubuerunt’).

²³ Zeus (Jupiter) is said to have carried off Ganymede, a handsome Trojan prince, to Olympus, to serve there as his personal cup-bearer: Ovid, *Met.* x. 155–61.

the collusion of demons, to whom he sacrificed a pig's liver²⁴ and a chicken every day.²⁵

11. What is there by way of sanctity in Hercules, who, becoming exhausted by killing all his neighbours, is himself consigned to be burned in a fire by the command of one god?²⁶ And the wretch burned along with the sword and (lion) skin which he carried. And although he had killed a lion, cut down the Hydra, tied up the hound of hell,²⁷ he nevertheless was reduced to dust and was seen nowhere, but had died. What sanctity is there in Apollo, with his dionysiac mysteries, drunkenness, disorder and Delphic divinations and excessive drinking?²⁸ If we come now to Queen Juno and that most incestuous Venus, we shall find them quarreling bitterly, for the reason that one of them preceded the other in foul behaviour. All the writings of the poets and orators and historiographers announce this, as is (stated) in Vergil: "The judgement of Paris and the insult to beauty scorned".²⁹ Why is the one indignant, why is the other overjoyed, except that one of them is chosen by the judgement of a shepherd to be more suitable for lewdness, and the other is denied? Accordingly, having demolished these distinctions, for which the unlearned crowd claims the privilege of divinity, let us remain silent concerning the other minor (divinities): for there is one head, which the entire framework of the body follows. For whosoever considers him- or herself to be a god or goddess, should not be preferred to Saturn, Jupiter, Juno, and Venus. If, therefore, those holding the privilege (of divinity) are proved to be so wretched and base, how much more wretched will be those who announce themselves as their lowly worshippers?

12. Daria replied to this: 'Since the figments of the poets are sustained by (arguments of) no strength, let us turn to the philosophers, whose genius cuts away all the vices and submits its neck to the virtues. Although they are seen to

²⁴ *ficatum* (*ActaSS.*), *iecur* (*Mombritius*). Both words mean the same thing. The more formal Classical Latin word *iecur* was presumably replaced by the Vulgar Latin term *ficatum* (the source of e.g. Italian *fegato*, French *foie*: see Grandgent, *Vulgar Latin*, p. 63 [§141]) at some stage of the transmission.

²⁵ These anecdotes concerning Mercury (his discovery of money hidden in the ground, his calming serpents by incantations, his sacrificing a pig's liver and a chicken to demons every day) are not found in classical sources; they are possibly inventions by Chrysanthus for comic effect.

²⁶ Hercules was burned alive by Jupiter on a pyre on Mt Oeta, so as to become a god. The story is told by Ovid (*Met.* ix. 249–72), and is the subject of Seneca's play *Hercules Oetaeus*.

²⁷ Chrysanthus alludes to three of the so-called 'labours' of Hercules, as narrated by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*: he killed the Nemean lion (ix. 197–8); he cut down the Lernaean Hydra (ix. 69 and 192–3), and he tied up Cerberus, the hound of hell (ix. 185).

²⁸ Because of his powers of prophecy, Apollo is described as the 'Delphic' god by Ovid (*Met.* ii. 543–4). However, the description of his Dionysiac mysteries, drunkenness, and disorder pertains more appropriately to the god Bacchus, whose drunken revels are described by Ovid (*Met.* iii. 517–42).

²⁹ *Aen.* i. 27; see De Strycker, 'Une citation de Virgile'. The story of the Judgement of Paris is told by Hyginus, *Fabulae*, c. 92 ('Iudicium Paridis').

debate the structure of the universe with varying interpretations, yet they distinguish the names of the gods by means of allegorical interpretation: they show that Saturn represents time, since *Cronos*, which is his name in Greek, cannot be understood as anything other than time; but they call the fiery substance Jupiter, the air Juno, fire Vesta, the sea³⁰ Neptune, the earth Magna Mater, and they argue that other personalities of the gods and goddesses are hidden under veils of this sort.³¹ Chrysanthus (said) to this: 'The images', he said, 'of those (gods) who cannot at any time be present, are customarily represented through some likeness. But the earth, which can never be absent, or fire, which is always present, and air, which is plainly visible to the eyes of everyone: I do not know why these are thought to be suitably worshipped by some kinds of images. Nor do I understand at all why the image of something is more to be worshipped than the truth. Is this (to be observed) in kings or judges, who order themselves to be abandoned, and their likeness to be honoured? Because if no reason permits this, it remains that these likenesses are not of the elements, but are proven instead to be images of deceased and dead men rather than of gods.'

13. Daria replied to this: 'Your assertion has supplied proof for my words. For you taught that, if unlearned persons worship images, let us adore the things themselves, of which they worship the images; and we should pay our respects to the majesty of each such thing more wisely than others do.' 'Splendidly', said Chrysanthus, 'do you get to the gist of my argument. But let us bring into view the worshippers of all the elements with their various proclivities. And let one worship the earth like a goddess, but in such a way that he may be found worthy of her through supplications, sacrifices, and every kind of worship, as befits a goddess, such that he desists from use of the plough and the mattock. Another (person), denying this (method of worship), displays the use of the plough and mattock against the goddess—he cultivates her not by venerating her, but as a peasant-farmer working her. Which one of these is to be trusted to bring forth a crop? The latter, without doubt, who cultivates her simply as the earth; not the former, who venerates her like a goddess with meaningless superstition. For if she were truly a goddess, she would provide abundant crops for him who was honouring her with the distinction of worship. Likewise another person venerates Neptune, that is, the sea, with divine worship; and he either sets sail in stormy weather, or, like a religious worshipper, awaits his [Neptune's] returns. But another person judges (Neptune), being as it were an inanimate element, to be unworthy of

³⁰ Reading *mare* (*ActaSS.*) for the meaningless *amare* in *Mombritius*.

³¹ Cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* [CPL 14], i. 13. 4: 'figurans Iovem in substantiam feruidam et Iunonem eius in aeream secundum sonum Graecorum uocabulorum, item Vestam in ignem et Camenas in aquam et Magnam Matrem in terram' (*CCSL* I, pp. 454–5), a parallel pointed out by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 145, n. 300.

any religious veneration; he, when the weather is stable and not unsettled, will commit himself to the waves and seek marine returns not by worshipping but by fishing. Which of these two do you think would sail most propitiously and return with feasts of fish? The latter, without doubt, who looks to his business rationally, not the former, who believes that these (results) are to be anticipated by means of pointless ritual. The same is to be believed of the other elements, which offer nothing to their worshippers, because they are not subservient to the needs of men either by their movements or by divine command. At the command of God, therefore, the earth conceives through the heat of the sun, gives birth through the mildness of the air, is nourished by showers from the sky: for thus do the qualities of the seasons cooperate. He alone is deserving of veneration, Who performs these operations, not the elements in which they are performed. Nor do those who learn their letters give thanks to the wax tablets and codices rather than to their teacher; and sick persons who are healed by a doctor: do they think payment should be made to the scalpels and medicines, rather than to the doctor himself?

14. As Chrysanthus was pursuing these and other (arguments), Daria believed (in Christ); and, having a common plan, they took on the name of wedlock with feigned intention, so that they could persevere in the fear of God and the glory of chastity. And when Chrysanthus had received his father's permission (for the marriage), he had Daria baptized in his house; and thus within a few days she became a sacred virgin of Christ, so that she seized on all the scriptures and adapted the veil of her virginity to Christian purposes. For she was joined to Chrysanthus not by physical warmth but by the heat of the Holy Spirit. And as a multitude of men ran to Chrysanthus for the sake of Christ, so innumerable women (came) to Daria.

15. Therefore, when many virgins, having abandoned the love of their betrothed, gave themselves over to Christ, and young men, having abandoned the pursuit of pleasure and carnal affairs, devoted themselves to chastity, an insurrection was stirred up in the city, and a public inquiry, administered by Celerinus the urban prefect,³² is launched. Young men cried out, 'We are losing our spouses because of Daria'; husbands cried out, 'We have lost our wives'; women shouted, 'We are losing our husbands because of Chrysanthus, and we do not even have sons.' And there was various and mutinous uproar among those at the inquiry. And so they [Chrysanthus and Daria] were ordered to be arrested by the prefect, and to be afflicted with various punishments if they scorned the ceremonies of sacrifice. Chrysanthus is handed over to the tribune Claudius. This Claudius handed him over to seventy soldiers,

³² No urban prefect named Celerinus is found among the list of urban prefects for the years 254–354 in the 'Chronographer of 354' (*MGH, AA IX*, pp. 65–9); cf. discussion by Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 245–6.

saying: 'Take him out of the city to the temple of Hercules Invictus³³ where, if he refuses to sacrifice, apply various tortures until he consents.'

16. Then the soldiers bound him with wet (leather) thongs, so that, as the thongs slowly dried out, the force of the binding would press on his bones; however, as soon as he was tied up, all the shackles on his hands became undone so quickly that the eyes of observers could not follow the speed at which they were released; and, turning (their attention) in this way and that to the reluctant bindings, the soldiers bound him up with knots and clever tricks. As quickly as the hands binding him let go of the shackles, whatever they had tied up came undone as quickly as the telling. Then the soldiers, enraged, place him in a fresh and knotty tree trunk,³⁴ so that his legs were locked in it up to the third joint.³⁵ And so, when they were standing in front of him and ridiculing him, the wood (of the tree trunk) rotted so quickly that it was reduced to dust. Taking Chrysanthus, the soldiers poured human urine over him, saying, 'Now you can abandon your wickedness.' As soon as he had been soaked in this foul-smelling urine, the stinking liquid was turned into nectared perfume, so that you would think he had been sprinkled not with urine but with rose water. Taking him away from that place, they skinned a calf, and wrapped him naked in the fresh skin and placed him in the sun. But during the whole day, in the heat of the blazing sun, the calfskin could not be dried out in the heat; but, retaining its original moistness, the skin did not harm God's servant in any way. Then they put iron chains around his neck, and, binding his hands and feet, they enclosed him in a dark prison. The manacles immediately fell from his hands, and such great light flooded into that place, that many lanterns were thought to be burning there.

17. The seventy soldiers announce all this to Claudius, their tribune. After he [Claudius] had witnessed the immense light for himself, he ordered him [Chrysanthus] to come out to (meet) him, and said: 'What is the great power of your enchantments, that you can do all this? For I have subdued all

³³ There were several temples of Hercules Invictus outside of Rome, notably one on the Via Appia, at the sixth or seventh mile (Z. Mari, 'Herculis Magni sacellum (?)', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 57–9), and another on the Via Tiburtina (Z. Mari, 'Herculis templum (Via Tiburtina)', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 54–5).

³⁴ The sense in which *cippus* is used here is not attested in Classical Latin (see *TLL* III, cols. 1077–8). In Medieval Latin, however, the word comes to mean an instrument of torture, corresponding to what are called 'stocks' (see Du Cange, s.v.: 'instrumentum quo reorum pedes constringuntur, quasi capiens pedes', with reference to the present *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria; Blaise, p. 150; and Niermeyer, p. 180, where it is defined as 'tree stump', 'fetter', with references to Merovingian saints' Lives and to Aldhelm). For illustration of the instrument itself, see Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 60–2.

³⁵ Latin *in tertio puncto* ('to the third joint'), that is, presumably, to the knees, counting the articulation of the toes as the first, the joint of the ankle as the second, and the knees as the third. (There would be little point in placing a prisoner in stocks unless his lower legs at least were constricted.) In the long entry for *punctum* in *TLL* (X/2, cols. 2643–9), there is no example of the word's being used to describe the joints of a human body.

sorcerers and hierophants and Chaldaeans and soothsayers and enchanters, and have not so far experienced enchantment this powerful. Yet I commanded them all (to do) what I wished, and bent their inclinations to my will. But now I have received you, a learned senator, for this sole purpose, that, in scorning the superstition of Christian audacity—about which the people's grumbling and insurrection has been stirred up—you may indulgently offer due sacrifices to the almighty gods, so that I may restore you to your kinsfolk.' Chrysanthus said to him in reply: 'If there were even a spark of intelligence in you, you would recognize that I am not aided by the arguments and divine support of enchanters; but look at me the way you (look at) those (gods), whom you are known to worship with unreasonable discernment: if your eyes were to investigate wisely, you would understand that your gods do not see; if your ears were to take in the truth, you would recognize that they cannot hear the voices of people shouting at them; if your inwards were to admit any perception of intelligence, you would realize that these (gods) have nothing in their inwards except clay and lead.'

18. Then Claudius the tribune ordered him to be beaten with staves. And as soon as the stiff staves were brought in, they began to go as soft as a feather in the hands of the torturers—staves which, when they were (first) picked up, were as solid and rough as iron; but when they were striking (Chrysanthus), they were rendered soft and light as if they were made of papyrus. At this point Claudius the tribune ordered him to be stood up, and he dressed him in his clothes. Then, turning to his soldiers, he addresses them with these words: 'You well know that I have (frequently) detected the deceptions of enchanters and sorcerers. In this case, where the might of divine power was displayed, we are not dealing with human practices. For the bindings of thongs were spontaneously undone; the solidity of the log rotted with sudden fatigue; in the excessive heat of the sun the moistness of the calf-skin remained the same as when it had been freshly stripped from the calf; an invisible force also dissolved the links of the chains; a place of darkness shone with immense light; staves, which were stiff in the hand of someone holding them, become soft as green twigs in the blows of the person beating (him). In the sight of someone suffering these things, a certain honesty is evident; in the very announcement of them a rational truth is established. What remains, except that we all throw ourselves at the feet of this man and seek his forgiveness for our crimes, and ask that he make us too worship such a God as this, Who makes His worshippers victorious in every contest? For behold: we, and the judges, and whoever came up against him—did he not overcome them, as you have witnessed?' Therefore, when he had said these and other things to the soldiers, Claudius himself with all his soldiers, having thrown himself at his knees, prayed by saying: 'In truth I have established that your God is the true (God); I ask that you cause me to know Him, and to come somehow to knowledge of His worship.' Chrysanthus said to him: 'If you desire to come to knowledge

of His worship, you are to proceed not on your feet but in your heart. For God is made present to someone only to the extent that he seeks Him in the faith of his mind and the purity of his body.'

19. With Chrysanthus expounding these and similar things, Claudius the tribune believed (in Christ); Hilaria his wife believed; his two sons, Jason and Maurus, believed; all his friends and neighbours believed; his entire household believed; and all the seventy soldiers believed with their families. And they were all baptized on the same day; over a number of days they eagerly listened to an exposition of the truth by St Chrysanthus; and, receiving the Word of Christ with all reverence and fear, they hoped even to be able to suffer adversity in the name of God. But because it is a lengthy business to narrate all the miracles which the Lord accomplished through them, let us announce the end result.

20. When they had all believed in God, and the emperor Numerian had heard of this, he ordered that Claudius the tribune be cast headlong into the middle of the sea with a huge stone tied to him.³⁶ He (ordered that) all the soldiers be heard individually, and whoever denied that he was a Christian was to be released, but whoever did not wish to deny (this), was to be decapitated. The Lord granted such favour to those believing in Him, that first Jason and Maurus, the sons of Claudius, said that they believed in Christ without even being asked; and they eagerly chose death for the confession of His name. In the place where they were beheaded there was an ancient crypt; the Christians, occupying this place at night, buried all the bodies (of the soldiers) together, not far from the city on the road which is called the Via Salaria.³⁷ St Hilaria, the widow of the martyr Claudius, recovered the bodies of her sons, and, burying them individually—that is, Maurus and Jason—put them in individual sarcophagi.³⁸

³⁶ As Amore remarks (*I martiri di Roma*, p. 52), the fact that the author does not refer to pious Christians recovering and burying the body of Claudius probably indicates that he has been invented. The name was possibly derived from the entry for Pope Marcellinus (296–304) in the *Liber pontificalis*, where mention is made of a martyr named Claudius buried in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nuova (ed. Mommsen, p. 41; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 162; trans. Davis, p. 13).

³⁷ 'Sixty-two soldiers', buried in the cemetery of Thrasion on the Via Salaria Nuova, are commemorated on 25 October in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 657), and are the subject of one of the epigrams of Damasus concerning sixty-two martyrs (Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 184–6 (no. 43); Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 163–4; and trans. below, Appendix II (r), p. 647). Note that the numbers of the soldiers vary in various manuscripts of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*; see discussion by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 53.

³⁸ SS. Maurus and Jason are commemorated together on 12 August in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 655); Maurus is commemorated alone on 10 December in the same source (Appendix III, p. 658), and in a brief epigram of Damasus (Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, p. 186 (no. 44); Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 164–5; and trans. below, Appendix II (s), p. 647)).

21. And while she [Hilaria] was praying to God with devout fervour in the presence of the saints, she was arrested. While she was about to be taken away, she asked those who were taking her: 'I beg you, allow me first to finish my prayer, and (then) I shall come wherever you wish.' Therefore, when she had stopped walking, she received the Lord's sacrament, and, extending her hands (in prayer), she said: 'My Lord Jesus Christ, because I confess You with all my heart, unite me with my sons, whom You summoned from my womb to their martyrdom.' And, saying this, she prostrated herself in prayer, and while she was praying, gave up her spirit. Then those (soldiers) who had arrested her, grieving over her sudden death, released the two slave-girls who were with her; and they then buried her with extreme care. They built a small basilica over her, because the place in which she had died was Hilaria's garden, and from the time when the saints had been martyred, she had built for herself a dwelling-place there.³⁹

22. Meanwhile he [Numerian] ordered Chrysanthus to be detained in a lowly prison, so that, together with Daria, he could be inflicted with various kinds of torture. There was a holding cell in the Tullian prison (*carcer Tullianus*),⁴⁰ from which a horrible stench rose up, because excrement produced by the (nearby) houses collected in the underground passageways of the sewers which flowed together there; and at this collection point, as we said, there was a filthy holding cell, so dark that the atmosphere gave no indication that it was daytime, nor any trace of light. Into this cell Chrysanthus, bound up in iron, is thrust naked. Daria, however, is placed in a public house of prostitution. But Christ attends the various sufferings of these saints in various ways. For divine light and heaven-sent fragrance are presented to Chrysanthus. A lion, fleeing from a pit in the amphitheatre, is directed towards Daria; entering the cell in which Daria was lying prostrate in prayer, the lion

³⁹ St Hilaria is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 12 August and 31 December (see Appendix III, pp. 655, 650). The cemetery of Hilaria is recorded in one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum* (Appendix IV (a) [§3]), as lying on the Via Salaria Nuova between the cemetery of Thrason and that of the Giordani, and has been identified by recent archaeological excavation; see P. De Santis, 'S. Hilariae spelunca, ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium*, III, pp. 65–7, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 55–7.

⁴⁰ The *carcer Tullianus* was the most famous public prison in Rome. It was constructed from earlier tufa quarries which had been dug into the Capitoline Hill; its entrance was (and is) located at the foot of the Capitol, on its north-east side. See Platner–Ashby, pp. 99–100; Richardson, p. 71; F. Coarelli, 'Carcer', *LTUR* I, pp. 236–7; P. Fortini, *Carcer Tullianum* [sic]. *Il Carcere Mamertino al Foro Romano* (Rome, 1998); and *eadem*, 'Nuovi documenti sul carcere Mamertino'. In Late Latin sources, particularly in the *passiones martyrum*, the same prison comes to be known as the *Carcer Mamertinus*: see G. De Spirito, 'Carcer Tullianus (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* I, pp. 237–9. The present *passio* is the only one of these texts which refers to the prison by its original name (*carcer Tullianus*), and it provides the fullest description of the filth and stench which must have characterized the place. It also figures in the *passiones* of Pope Callistus (XII.4), St Polychronius and others (XVI.12), SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX.1, 3, and 8), Pope Marcellus (XX.4), and the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII.11); see Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Della custodia Mamertini', pp. 10–23, with discussion of the present *passio* at pp. 10–11.

immediately threw itself down beside her, so it seemed as if it, too, was adoring Him Who was revealing His presence to the praying virgin.

23. Not knowing that there was a lion in there, they sent to her an extremely ugly man, who was supposed to be famous in the sin of seduction. As soon as he entered, the lion sprang at him, and pinned him down beneath its feet; he began to look at the face of Daria, the virgin of Christ, as if asking what she would wish. Understanding the situation, the blessed Daria said (to the lion): 'I beg you by the Son of God, for Whom I freely embrace the sufferings of martyrdom, not to harm him in any way, but allow him to hear my words without fear.'

24. Then the lion, releasing him, positioned itself at the entrance, so that the man would not take the opportunity to flee, and no one else would be able to enter. Then St Daria says to him: 'Behold how the ferocity of the lion, having heard the name of Christ, pays its respect to God. And you, a rational man, apply yourself to such great crimes, that you even rejoice in this (situation) where you are to be lamented as a wretch.' Then, prostrating himself in front of her, he began to shout out, saying: 'Let me go out of here unscathed, so that I may proclaim to everyone that Christ Whom you worship as the Son of God is the true God.' Then Daria ordered the lion to move away from the entrance. When he got outside, the man began to shout out, and to run about everywhere in the city, saying: 'You all know that Daria is the servant of God.' And then, when various huntsmen and various (other) people set out to capture the lion, God granted such power to the lion that it could capture all of them, and seizing them as it were with its hand, it placed them before the feet of St Daria without harming them in any way.

25. Then Daria addressed them all, saying: 'If you promise that you will believe in Christ, you can depart from here unscathed; if not, I do not know if your gods will be able to help you.' Then they all shouted out in unison: 'Whoever does not believe that Christ is the true God, let him not go out of here alive.' And saying this they all began to go out, shouting in one voice: 'O Roman people, believe that there is no other God besides Christ.' Then the prefect, named Celerinus, commanded that a great fire be lit at the entrance to the cell in which Daria and the lion were (staying). When it saw what was happening, the lion began to be frightened and to roar. The blessed Daria said to it: 'Do not be frightened: you will not be burned in the fire, nor will you be captured, nor can you be killed, but you will die a death of your own. Depart in safety, and go, because He Whom you honoured in me will free you.' Then with its head bowed the lion goes out into the midst of the crowds of people. No one could ever capture it, and it never harmed a man. Those who had escaped safely from its jaws were all baptized.

26. All these things were announced to Numerian, and he gave the order to Celerinus the (urban) prefect that both of them—that is, Chrysanthus and Daria—should be punished with various tortures if they would not consent to

sacrifice. Therefore, when Celerinus had compelled them to sacrifice, and he had said and heard various things, he ordered that St Chrysanthus be suspended from a huge rack. And when he was placed on the rack, all the wooden beams of the rack were shattered; various chains were broken apart; and the torches which were to be applied to his sides were all extinguished. As for those who laid hands on St Daria: their sinews were struck senseless, and because of the pain they let out roars and groans from the heart. On seeing this Celerinus the prefect was profoundly frightened, and hastening to the emperor by a swift course, he related to him everything which had happened. Then Numerian the emperor, imputing these events not to divine miracles but to enchantments, ordered them to be taken to the Via Salaria and to be placed together in an underground cavern (*arenarium*)⁴¹ there, and both of them—that is, Chrysanthus and Daria—to be buried alive by being covered over with earth and stones.⁴² The blessed Chrysanthus is immediately placed in a pit with the blessed virgin Daria, with both of them persisting in psalms and prayers. In their martyrdom there was established an alliance of blood: just as they had been wedded in mind, they remained of one will when placed together on a bed, as it were, in the pit. The martyrdom was such that it conferred burial, rather than punishment, on the servants of God. God received this living sacrifice, through Whose grace it came about that those who had persevered together in their virginity arrived together at the crown (of martyrdom).

27. Therefore, when God had bestowed many benefits on those people coming (to visit) their tombs, it happened that on the day of their birth (into eternity) [29 November] an infinite multitude of people turned up—men as well as women and infants and unmarried girls. When this was reported to the hearing of Numerian, he ordered that a wall be raised at the entrance of the crypt by which they went in; when it had been finished, he

⁴¹ The literal meaning of (*h*)*arenarium* is ‘sandpit’; but what is meant is a place from which tufa is excavated to create an underground cave or gallery, or in other words, a catacomb: see *DACL* II/2, cols. 2406–8 and *TLL* VI/3, col. 2531, s.v. ‘harenarium’, where it is glossed as ‘locus sepulturae Christianorum’, as well as discussion by J. Kollwitz, ‘Arenarium’, in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* I, cols. 646–7, and Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 117: ‘arenarium...literally “sandpit”, but *arena* means not only sand but also the volcanic “tufa” into which the galleries of cemeteries (catacombs) could be excavated; *arenarium* seems to mean the surface layers of the ground above a subterranean gallery (“crypt”) of a cemetery.’

⁴² As we know from the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 657), SS. Chrysanthus and Daria were buried in the cemetery of Thrasion on the Via Salaria Nuova: see Cipollone, ‘Il santuario dei martiri Crisanto e Daria’, and *idem*, ‘SS. Chrysanthi et Dariae ecclesia’, *LTUR. Suburbium*, II, pp. 98–101. On the cemetery of Thrasion, the existence of which is recorded as early as the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 636), see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 439–53; Testini, *Archaeologia cristiana*, p. 251; A. Ferrua, ‘Visite del Torrigio alla catacomba di S. Saturnino’, *RACr* 58 (1982), 31–45; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 123–4; D. de Francesco, ‘Trasonis coemeterium’, *LTUR. Suburbium*, V, pp. 183–4; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 48–55, with discussion of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria at pp. 50–5.

heaped up a mountain of sand over them.⁴³ While they were all taking mass together, and had celebrated the glory of the martyrs, they themselves attained to the crown of martyrdom.⁴⁴ Among them were Diodorus the priest and Maurinus the deacon and several clerics. There was a multitude of people; but neither the number nor their names are recorded, because we judge it to be superfluous and tearful.

28. We—the brothers Virinus and Armenius, who were both consecrated priests by St Felix the pope of the apostolic see⁴⁵—wrote down all these things exactly as they happened, and we sent them to all churches in both the East and the West, so that the entire world may know that the Lord received His martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria, with many other sons, in the triumph of martyrdom and the glory of a perpetual crown. Amen.

⁴³ Neither the text of *Acta SS.* ('de zabulo super eos montem deiecit') nor that of Mombricitus ('adsublonem montem super eos deiecit') is sound here; the author was attempting to say that Numerian executed the Christian worshippers who were celebrating mass on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Chrysanthus and Daria by burying them all beneath a heap of tufa. The word for 'sand' or 'tufa' is *sabulo*, -onis; so the ablative form would correctly be *de sabulone*, not *zabulo* (the reading in *Acta SS.*), which means 'the devil'; and the phrase *adsublonem montem* in Mombricitus is ungrammatical.

⁴⁴ There is substantial bibliography on the practice of commemorating the anniversaries of martyrs in the cemeteries where they were buried—the rite of the *agape* or *refrigerium* ('funerary meal'): see *DACL* I/1, cols. 775–848 [H. Leclercq], esp. 816–20; A.-M. Schneider, 'Una nuova rappresentazione della cena funebre nella catacomba dei SS. Pietro et Marcellino', *RACr* 4 (1927), 161–4; Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 23–49; Février, 'Le culte des morts dans les communautés chrétiennes', pp. 228–55; Jastrzebowska, *Untersuchungen zum christlichen Totenmahl*; Guyon, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*, pp. 330–6; and Flocchi Nicolai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, pp. 45–9.

⁴⁵ It is not clear which pope named Felix is intended here: it cannot be Felix I (268–73), who lived before the reign of Numerian (283–4); other popes named Felix include Felix II (355–65), Felix III (483–92), and Felix IV (526–30). In any case this final chapter, in which the authors give their names, is pure fiction, and cannot have formed part of the original *passio*.

XI

St Susanna

c.450 × 500; relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Susanna, and the cemetery of Alexander (Via Nomentana)

The present *passio* is an attempt to provide personalities for the names associated with a *titulus*-church located on an important thoroughfare on the Quirinal (the ancient *Alta Semita*, an intra-urban extension of the Via Nomentana, now the Via XX Settembre), a church that in the late fifth century was known as the *titulus* of Gaius, and by the end of the sixth century had become known as the *titulus* of St Susanna, perhaps through the popularity of the present *passio*.¹ As is almost invariably the case with *titulus*-churches, the identity of the founder—someone named Gaius—is wholly unknown. The author of the *passio*, presumptively a cleric of the *titulus Gaii*, took the bold step of identifying this unknown Gaius with Pope Gaius (282–95). From this identification, an entire chain of (fictitious) relationships was developed by our author: Pope Gaius had a brother, the priest Gabinius, and Gabinius in turn had a beautiful daughter named Susanna, who was well educated in secular and Christian literature, and was a devout Christian. The family was related to the emperor Diocletian (c. 1). Accordingly, Diocletian sent one Claudius, a cousin of Gabinius, to ask for the hand of Susanna in marriage to his adoptive son Maximian (c. 2). Gabinius asked for some days' respite in order to consult with Susanna (c. 3), and Gabinius and Susanna decided to consult Pope Gaius (c. 4), which they duly did (c. 5). After three days, Claudius returned and reiterated the emperor's proposal (c. 6). Susanna declared herself repelled by her cousin Claudius because he was a pagan (c. 7), whereupon Claudius asked Pope Gaius to baptize him (cc. 8–9). On returning home, Claudius reported this to his wife Praepedigna, who went with her two sons (Alexander and Cutia) to the house of Gabinius, with the result that the entire family was baptized, and Claudius began to sell off his property and to distribute the proceeds to the poor (cc. 10–12). Diocletian, wishing to find out what was

¹ Listed *BHL* 3937 and *CPL* 2237; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 130–2; *BSS* XII, cols. 78–80 [A. Amore]; Duchesne, 'Les légendes de l'Alta Semita', pp. 33–42; Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'S. Susanna e il *titulus Gaii*'; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 148–54.

going on with Susanna, sent Maximus, his Count of the Privy Purse and the brother of Claudius, to ask Claudius about Susanna; Maximus was shocked when he saw Claudius in an emaciated state as a result of his doing penance; on hearing his explanation, Maximus, too, decided to become a Christian, and the two brothers went for this reason to Gabinius (cc. 13–15). Bishop Gaius soon arrived at the house of Gabinius, and undertook the Christian instruction of both Claudius and Maximus, leading to their baptism (cc. 16–20). Maximus now began to sell off his property and give the proceeds to the poor (c. 21). A principal assistant in the *officium* of Maximus, named Arsicius, reported all this to Diocletian (c. 22), who ordered the execution of Maximus, as well as Claudius, with all his [Claudius'] family (c. 23). Diocletian next asked his wife, Serena, to intercede with Susanna, in order to persuade her to marry Maximian, without effect (c. 24). In a move of desperation, Maximian went to Susanna's house, hoping to rape her (with Diocletian's blessing); but a shining angel appeared and protected her, whereupon Maximian fled back to Diocletian in terror (c. 25). Diocletian first remonstrated with Serena (c. 26), and then sent an agent to Susanna's house, to force her to sacrifice; but she caused the statuette of Jupiter, to which she was supposed to sacrifice, to disappear (c. 27). The statuette was soon found lying outside the Sallustian Palace, which caused Diocletian to order her execution in her own home (c. 28). Serena recovered her body and buried it in the catacombs of Pope Alexander (c. 29).

Because it was located on an important thoroughfare, the church of St Susanna had unusual importance: it was here, for example, that Pope Sergius was priest, before he was elevated to the pontificate. From the present *passio* we learn that, after Susanna's death, Pope Gaius made a habit of visiting her home—that is, in the house of Gabinius, her father²—in order to celebrate mass there (c. 29), and his liturgical celebrations formed the focal point of the eventual church. Because the house of Gabinius was adjacent to Gaius' own house, the original church was known as being *ad duas domus*, 'at the two houses'; but by the end of the fifth century it had come to be known as the *titulus Gaii*,³ as we have seen. As is usual in the case of *titulus*-churches, the identity of Gaius, the founder, is unknown. A century later, the same *titulus*-church had come to be known as the *titulus sanctae Susannae*.⁴ As it stands, the present church of S. Susanna is a building dating from the ninth century, fronted by a magnificent baroque façade built by Carlo Maderno c.1600, and is presumably to be identified as the church which, according to the *Liber*

² See G. De Spirito, 'Domus Gabinii', *LTUR* II, p. 106.

³ The Roman synod of 499 was attended by two priests of the *titulus Gaii*: *MGH, AA XII*, p. 413; cf. Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 125.

⁴ The Roman synod of 595, held under the presidency of Gregory the Great, was attended by a priest from S. Susanna: *MGH, Epist.* I, p. 367, and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 125. See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 70–4; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 228–32; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 486–7; and A. Milella, 'S. Susanna, titulus', *LTUR* IV, pp. 387–8.

pontificalis, was rebuilt by Pope Leo III (795–816).⁵ Archaeological excavation has revealed that Pope Leo's church was built over a basilica dating, in the opinion of Krautheimer, from the fourth century; and beneath this basilica, in turn, were found the remains of two second-century *domus*.⁶ Recent excavations have largely confirmed these findings.⁷

The present *passio* of St Susanna must date from after c.450, since it is modelled in many ways on the *passio* of St Caecilia by Arnobius the Younger (no. IV).⁸ On the other hand, it was drawn on c.530 by the compiler of the first edition of the *Liber pontificalis* for his entry on Pope Gaius, and was subsequently used by the author of the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (no. XX), writing perhaps c.550.

Text. In comparison with many of the other *passiones martyrum* translated here, the present *passio* enjoyed relatively restricted circulation: *BHLms* lists thirty-one manuscripts, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further nine:⁹ some forty in all. This is a case where full collation of the manuscript witnesses might help to establish a reliable text; for it must be said that the two printed texts in current use are wholly unsatisfactory: that by Mombricitus (II, pp. 553–9), and that by the Bollandists, which was printed in two separate parts, in volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* issued over three quarters of a century apart: *Acta SS., Februarii* III [1658], pp. 61–4 (cc. 1–23), and *Augusti* II [1735], pp. 631–2 (cc. 24–9). The texts printed by Mombricitus and the Bollandists are closely similar, but there are inevitably places where one offers a more intelligible reading than the other; unfortunately, however, there are numerous places where the two texts reproduce nonsense, and the meaning is doubtful. I have commented on the most desperate passages in the accompanying footnotes, and have emended corruption at places where a solution seemed possible. The chapter numbering is that of the Bollandists (save that I have continued the numeration of Part I (cc. 1–23) into that of Part II (cc. 24–9)).

1. In the days of the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian,¹⁰ there was a certain priest from Rome named Gabinius, who was the brother of Pope Gaius;¹¹ he

⁵ Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, pp. 182–3.

⁶ Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 254–78, esp. 274–6; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 196–7; and *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 177–80.

⁷ A. Bonanni, 'La basilica di S. Susanna a Roma', pp. 586–9, and *idem*, 'Scavi e ricerche in S. Susanna a Roma', pp. 359–75.

⁸ Cécile Lanéry points out that the conversions of Claudius and Maximus are modelled on those of Valerian and Tiburtius in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV); the figure of Pope Gaius in the present work reflects that of Pope Urban in the earlier work; and Susanna, like Caecilia, is murdered in her own home ('Hagiographie', p. 151).

⁹ 'Hagiographie', p. 151, n. 313.

¹⁰ The 'days of Diocletian and Maximian' extend from 284 (when Diocletian became emperor) and 285 (when Maximian was made Caesar by Diocletian) until 305, when they both abdicated.

¹¹ Gaius was pope 282–95; according to the *Liber pontificalis*, he was from Dalmatia and belonged to the same family as Diocletian (ed. Mommsen, pp. 39–40; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 161;

was learned in Christian writings, and was as much a lover of divine learning as of secular letters. He often discussed with his brother Gaius (the project of) composing some books of argument against the pagans, and he was erudite in the study of all secular letters; yet, because he was born of a senatorial family, he had a wide reputation, since he was from the same family as Diocletian. Gaius, too, was widely known. This Gabinius, the priest, had an only daughter, who was extremely sweet and beautiful, whom he had brought up in the study of secular letters, and he had similarly trained her in Christian literature, so that she was the equal of her father in this respect.

2. Hearing that the girl was beautiful in both appearance and wisdom, Diocletian sent to Gabinius and asked for her in marriage for his (adoptive) son Maximian.¹² Out of affection for family ties, he sent to Gabinius a certain man named Claudius, who was of his kin and was his cousin, so that he could obtain this (permission) peacefully from Gabinius, the priest. Arriving at (the home of) Gabinius, Claudius addresses him as follows: 'If it had not been a day of celebration for our lords the Augusti, he [Diocletian] would not have sent me to your good self; you, however, ought not to (allow yourself to) become remote from acknowledgement of the pleasantness of ties of kinship. What is better, what is more fitting, than that the nobility of our relationship be restored through the distinction of our lords the Augusti?'

3. Gabinius, the priest, replied: 'How is it that humble persons like us can be called kinsmen of senators?'¹³ Claudius replied by saying: 'Saintly brother, are you not the son, together with Gaius your brother, of Maximinus,¹⁴ the famous senator and consul, our uncle, and the cousin of our lords the Augusti?' Gabinius replied: 'It is so; yet we who were born latterly and insignificantly are not worthy to be described as such.' Claudius said to him: 'O scion of our common parentage: having consulted learned opinion, our lords the emperors—in particular Diocletian the Augustus—have commanded that your daughter, whom we know to have been trained in all (branches of)

trans. Davis, p. 12). But this latter piece of information evidently derives from the present *passio* (the Life of Gaius in *LP* is one of those which depend on a late antique *passio* such as the present *Passio S. Susannae*; see Mommsen, *Liber pontificalis*, p. xx, and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 153).

¹² The information that Maximian was the adoptive son of Diocletian is given below, c. 18 (*filius suo adoptivo*). It is purely a fiction.

¹³ Gabinius alludes to the fundamental distinction in Roman society between *honestiores*, the nobility of senatorial and equestrian rank, and *humiliores*, the middle and lower classes; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 17–18, and Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 221–80, esp. 221–33 (the vocabulary of privilege). However, as is clear from the sequel, Gabinius is in no sense of the *humilior* class, given his relationship to a (fictitious) consul and to the Augusti themselves.

¹⁴ This Maximinus is entirely fictional: no consul of this name is recorded during the reign of Diocletian (see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 91–3, and *PLRE* I, p. 1042) or before. Possibly the name was suggested by that of Maximinus Daia, who was consul in 307 (I), 311 (II), and 313 (III), who became Caesar in 305 and Augustus in 309 or 310, and who committed suicide after his defeat by Licinius in 313. Like Galerius, his uncle, this Maximinus was a fanatical pagan, and an enthusiastic persecutor of Christians—not a very suitable model for a brother of Pope Gaius.

learning, is to be handed over into union with his son, (that is), to be married to Maximian the Augustus; because it is right that shoots from a firm stem be not separated—which is something always hoped for by us and is (now) hoped for in joy.’ Gabinius, the priest, replied: ‘Give me (some days’) respite, that I may incline my daughter’s mind to this affectionate proposal.’ Having exchanged an embrace of farewell, they departed.

4. Then Gabinius, the priest, went to his daughter, Susanna; embracing her, he said: ‘I wish you to be taken to the holy father—my brother and your uncle¹⁵—Pope Gaius, so that what the Holy Spirit conferred on you will not be nullified.’ At the same time he asked Pope Gaius to come to him, and first explained to him everything which had happened; then, going into the house, they said in tears to the girl: ‘Diocletian the Augustus sent to us Claudius our cousin; on coming to us, he stated that (the emperor) seeks you, our beloved daughter, to be joined in matrimony to his son Maximian.’

5. Susanna replied to her father, and said: ‘Where has your wisdom been put, that you do not know me to be a Christian, since you were my teachers? Why have you defiled your mouths and ears in listening to polluted speech, to the effect that I be joined to a cruel pagan, whom you, in accordance with your belief in the Lord, were not afraid to deny was related to you by kinship? Glory be to Almighty God, Who deigned to join me to the bodies of the saints; because I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ to such an extent that, in scorning this man [Maximian] I shall ascend to the palm of martyrdom.’ Gabinius, the priest, replied: ‘Therefore, my daughter, be constant in the faith which you have.’ Bishop Gaius also said: ‘And from your constancy let us be found worthy to offer the fruit of our oblation to the Lord Jesus Christ; for I know that His devotion lies with all mankind, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is merciful.’ Susanna replied to Bishop Gaius, her uncle, and to her father, Gabinius, the priest, and said: ‘My lords, I know that I have been instructed from your lips that I should seek always to preserve my chastity, and to reveal my modesty to my Lord Jesus Christ. And, confirmed in my fear of Him, I shall never be polluted by male commitment to the desire for love: but I obey Him to Whom you once entrusted me, and I trust in Him, because He knows my conscience.’ Bishop Gaius said: ‘Therefore, if you have once been given to God, keep His commandments; because He deigned to show the path to us his servants through His evangelical teaching, so that when you stand before emperors and magistrates, do not worry beforehand about how to reply, because at that hour shall be given to you what you

¹⁵ The Vulgar Latin form *zius* (‘uncle’), originally a loanword from Greek (*θεῖος*) and hence also spelled *t(h)ius* (cf. Isidore, *Etym.* ix. 6. 15: ‘*Tius* Graecum est’), is the ancestor of modern Italian *zio*; see P. Aebischer, ‘Protohistoire de deux mots romans d’origine grecque: *thius* “oncle” et *thia* “tante”: Étude de stratigraphie linguistique’, *Annali della R. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 2nd ser. 5 (1936), 54–69, 125–42, and 211–24, and Löfstedt, *Late Latin*, p. 51.

should say; because it is not you who are speaking, but the Holy Spirit, who speaks on your behalf.’¹⁶ Susanna replied in tears: ‘I trust in my Lord Jesus Christ, because through your prayers I am made the temple of God, just as the Apostle St Paul entreated us, saying: “For the temple of God is holy, which you are: let no one seduce you”.’¹⁷

6. While they were discussing these things back and forth, suddenly after three days Claudius came to them, and cheerfully entered the house of Gabinius, and found them sitting there. Although he had arrived with a great multitude (of followers) and attendants, he did not go in with anyone accompanying him, or with any of the soldiers, but only by himself. And there was delight in his arrival, and in his presence they all embraced each other, and greeted each other with a kiss. Claudius, a distinguished senator (*clarissimus*),¹⁸ said: ‘Your saintly persons know for what delightful reason I have come to you.’ Gaius the bishop replied, and said to him: ‘If there are other reasons, or even for the sake of our common kinship, and the nature of our relationship, we deserve to be presented to our relatives.’ Claudius said: ‘Therefore let your saintly persons know that our lord, Diocletian the Augustus, desires to embrace the closeness and affection of your relationship (with him). Whence I suggest, and even request, your holiness, that you do the will of the lordly emperor of the entire world, and fill his soul with joy.’ Gabinius, the priest, replied and said: ‘Reveal to the holy bishop the injunction of the Augustus.’ Claudius said: ‘With joy and honour I shall reveal it’, and (then) Claudius said, ‘Our lord, the most merciful Augustus, seeks your daughter, my niece, in matrimony for his son Maximian the Caesar,¹⁹ because he has heard many good things about her learning. We think that there is nothing better than that our family should hasten to approach the insignia of government, and our distinguished kin should be exalted with this honour.’ Gabinius, the priest, said: ‘Nothing external obscures or prevents this: but let us nevertheless seek together the opinion of the girl.’

7. Then the young girl Susanna is summoned to the presence of Claudius and Gabinius, the priest, and Gaius, the bishop, so that no one else would be judged to be present with them. Then Claudius, on seeing Susanna, wished with tears to embrace and kiss her, because she was closely related to him by love and kinship. Susanna replied and said to Claudius: ‘Do not contaminate my mouth, because my Lord Jesus Christ knows that a man has never touched the mouth of me, his servant.’ Claudius replied and said: ‘I wished to kiss you as my mistress and niece, in accordance with the affection of love.’ Susanna, in

¹⁶ Matt. 10: 19–20. ¹⁷ I Cor. 3: 17.

¹⁸ On the three levels of senatorial rank—*virī illustres*, *spectabiles*, and *clarissimi*—see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9.

¹⁹ There is a narrow historical window for these alleged events: Maximian was made Caesar by his old comrade-in-arms Diocletian on 21 July 285, and was promoted to Augustus on 1 April 286.

the sight of Gabinius, the priest, her father, and Gaius, the bishop, spoke thus: 'Not only do I refuse your kiss, but I shall (continue to) refuse it, because your mouth is polluted with sacrifices to idols.' Claudius said: 'And what shall I do for my mouth to be purified from this impurity?' Susanna says to him: 'This is what you should do: do penance and be baptized in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.'

8. Claudius said to Gaius, the bishop: 'Purify me, therefore, if a pure man is better, who believes in Christ rather than in the gods whom I worshipped and made sacrifices to—(gods) to whom our emperors humble themselves.' Gaius the bishop said to Claudius in reply: 'Brother Claudius, listen to me. What I advise you is good, that which you have come to accept. The Lord wishes to redeem you through the request of the girl, so that our kinfolk may be saved, since the Lord Himself deigned to say in the Gospels: "Come unto me all you who are heavy laden, and I will refresh you".²⁰ There is no burden of sin worse than that a man be polluted by idols—(a man) whom the Lord God created, for whom He deigned to come down to earth and be born of a Virgin, and be humiliated and die on account of man, to whom in rising back up from hell He deigned to reveal Himself, (man) who is held by the chains of sins, that is, obedience to idols; so that, being lifted up, he be led to the threshold of the heavens.' Claudius, joyously taking in all this, said to Bishop Gaius: 'Most reverend man, I shall do everything which you are telling me: only let the request of Diocletian the Augustus not be postponed.' Bishop Gaius said: 'First fulfil our request, brother, and all things will be granted²¹ to you as you seek good for yourself.'

9. Claudius said: 'Explain to me all the things which I ought to observe, and I shall do your bidding. But as to what is to be done about Diocletian the Augustus: explain this to me at once, and how I shall unfold to him my explanation.' Bishop Gaius said: 'You, brother, take my advice, and be faithful to God, and do penance for the blood of the saints which you have spilled, and undergo baptism, and all things will be provided for you. Because our Lord deigned to advise us thus: "When you stand before magistrates and kings, I shall give you eloquence and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict".'²² Claudius said: 'And when I undergo baptism, will all the sins of my heart be deleted?' Gaius replied, and said: 'All your sins will be deleted, provided that you believe wholeheartedly.' In that same hour Susanna, throwing herself at the feet of Bishop Gaius, said to him: 'My lord, I beseech you, do not hesitate to baptize him, but redeem him.' Bishop Gaius says to her: 'Let us instigate an investigation to see if he is hastening to believe with all his heart.' Claudius said: 'I believe in your promise, that all my sins are

²⁰ Matt. 11: 28.

²¹ Reading *concedentur* (future) for *conceduntur* (Mombritius and the Bollandists).

²² Luke 21: 15.

(to be) absolved.’ Bishop Gaius said: ‘In the name of Jesus Christ and Almighty God, all your sins are absolved.’ That same day he threw himself on the ground before the feet of Bishop Gaius, and, abasing himself and sprinkling dust on his head, spoke as follows: ‘My Lord God, eternal Light, forgive me all the things which I did to Your saints, because I did them unknowingly; and I reject the idols, to which I offered sacrifices as a useless and empty wretch. Fill me with Your grace, so that all my sons and my wife may know that You save all those who believe in You.’ Then he made him a catechumen, and gave him (spiritual) medicine, and dismissed him.

10. Claudius, arriving at his home, reported all these things to his wife—how he had approached to the Lord’s grace through the request of a girl. Then his wife, named Praepedigna, was astonished when she heard all this, and said to Claudius her husband: ‘Who gave you these instructions?’ Claudius replied: ‘My brother Gaius, and Gabinus, the priest, and a young girl, a virgin outstanding in every respect.’ That same hour Praepedigna got into the compartment of her sedan chair, and came to the house of Gabinus, the priest, and went in alone to Bishop Gaius. On seeing her Gaius, the bishop, gave thanks to God. When she arrived there, she threw herself at the feet of Bishop Gaius, and clung to his feet, and kissed them with tears, saying: ‘Save your servant [Claudius], and me, and my sons.’ On hearing this Susanna, coming out of her bedchamber, joyfully embraces Praepedigna. Following after her by night, Claudius came with his two sons to the house of Gabinus, the priest, and threw himself at his feet, saying: ‘I beseech you by the Lord Jesus Christ: do not hesitate to baptize me, together with my wife and my sons.’

11. Then he made his wife and his sons, Alexander and Cutia, catechumens, in accordance with normal practice, and gave them the medicine of (spiritual) wisdom. Catechizing them that same hour, he brought holy water and blessed them in the fear of the Lord, and he baptized Claudius, to whom he said: ‘Do you believe in God the Father Almighty with all your heart?’ And Claudius replied, standing naked in a wooden basin: ‘I believe’. And again he said to him: ‘And in our Lord Jesus Christ?’ And he replied: ‘I believe’. ‘Who was born of the Holy Spirit?’ And he replied: ‘I believe, my lord.’ And again he said: ‘Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary?’ And Claudius replied: ‘I believe’. And he said to him: ‘As the servant and priest of God I baptize you in water, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the remission of sins and the resurrection of the body.’ And, when he had been lifted out of the basin, Claudius said: ‘I saw a light more brilliant than the sun shining on me. Whence I fully believe in God (and) the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.’²³ That same hour the blessed Gaius anointed him with

²³ This (fairly detailed) set of baptismal questions is discussed by Kinzig, ‘Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen’, pp. 131–2 (§39).

the chrism, and baptized his wife Praepedigna and his sons, Alexander and Cutia, whom Gabinius, the priest, received from the baptismal font. Then he offered on their behalf a sacrifice in the same house, and consecrated the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and milk and honey and the (baptismal) font, and participated with all of them in the mysteries of the Lord [i.e. mass].²⁴

12. From that same day Claudius began to sell off all his property, and to give it to the Christian poor. And seeking out on foot the hidden and secret places where Christians were living, he distributed money and clothing; and as for those whom he had ordered to be held in custody, he himself, going on foot to them with food and clothing, comforted them all, throwing himself at the feet of all those who were detained in custody, doing penance (in this way) and, as far as his resources allowed, he happily ministered to them every night.

13. After one month and sixteen days, Claudius is summoned by the emperor Diocletian. And when he asked about the girl named Susanna, it was reported to him that she was in the grip of a severe illness. And he dispatched to him [Claudius] his brother named Maximus, the Count of the Privy Purse (*Comes rei privatae*),²⁵ to visit and to speak to him about the girl Susanna, his cousin. When Maximus comes to Claudius, he finds him dressed in sackcloth, deep in prayer; and suddenly a great fear seizes him, and he says to Claudius: 'My beloved brother and dear friend, who deigned to educate me from the cradle onwards: for what reason have you become so thin?' Claudius said to Maximus his brother: 'If you would consider listening, I would explain to you the reason why I have this fever.' Then Maximus embraced him, and said to him: 'Explain to me, my lord, the sad state of your body.' Claudius says to him: 'I do penance, because I listened to the orders of the Emperor, and shed²⁶ the blood of innocent people; yet it was in ignorance that I shed the blood of saintly Christians and executed them.'

14. Maximus says to him: 'My lord, the emperor Diocletian, sent me to you for this reason, that we accept that the daughter of our brother Gabinius is to be joined in matrimony to the esteemed Caesar, and even Augustus [Maximian]; because such great honour is being paid to him, that our family will be raised up to a great height, and will not be separated from our common

²⁴ This is another example of a pontifical baptism carried out on domestic premises, of the kind studied by Sessa, 'Domestic Conversions' (she does not, however, make reference to the present example).

²⁵ The *Comes rei privatae* was a title used from the time of Constantine to describe the member of the imperial *comitium* who was responsible for the sales and grants of crown property to individuals, and payments of cash to the imperial treasury; because of the importance of his position, the *Comes rei privatae* accompanied the emperor everywhere. See Jones, *LRE*, pp. 339–40 and 412–17, and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 30–2. Given that Diocletian was almost never in residence in Rome (an exception being the occasion of his *vicennalia* in 303), his *Comes rei privatae* would not have been resident there either. The author's portrayal of Diocletian and his *comitium* as residing permanently in Rome is pure fiction.

²⁶ Reading *effudi* with Mombritius (the Bollandists print the nonsensical *effugi* here).

inheritance: and (yet) you insinuate such things into my mind?' Claudius replied, saying: 'I too sought my beloved mistress, my niece, concerning whom Diocletian the Augustus had given me orders; but I found her to be saintly, and outstanding in sweet wisdom and beauty, and dedicated to the eternal God: through her I have been redeemed from my sins. But so that you may know that Almighty God can save all men, let us go one night to the house of our brother²⁷ Gabinius, the priest, and you will see the eternal light.' Maximus said: 'Whatever you order me (to do), I shall do.'

15. That same night they came to the arch of the Salarian Gate,²⁸ near to the Sallustian Palace,²⁹ where Gabinius, the priest, was living. And it was announced to Gabinius, the priest, that 'Claudius and Maximus, your brothers, standing outside, wish to greet you.' Then Gabinius, the priest, going outside, met them, and brought them into his house; and when they entered, Gabinius, the priest, made a prayer, saying: 'Let us pray.' And when they were lying prostrate on the floor, Gabinius, the priest, said: 'O Lord God, (You) Who assemble things which have been scattered, and look (favourably) on things assembled this way, look to the works of Your hands, because You are the true Light forever and ever.' And they all said, 'Amen'. And getting up from the floor, they embraced and kissed each other in turn.

16. At that moment Claudius began joyfully to kiss the feet of Gabinius, the priest. On seeing this Maximus was astonished, and began to ask that Susanna be presented to him. Gabinius went into her bedchamber and called her. Susanna, coming out of the bedchamber and praising the Lord, said to her father: 'Give me your blessing.' And when she arrived, Gabinius began again to pray, saying, 'May peace be granted to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with God the Almighty Father forever and ever.' And they all replied, 'Amen'. Then Maximus, seeing the constancy of Susanna's

²⁷ Omitting the words *et patris*: Gabinius is in no sense the *father* of Claudius and Maximus.

²⁸ On the Salarian Gate (*porta Salaria*) through which the Via Salaria passed through the Aurelian Walls, see Platner-Ashby, pp. 416 and 567, and Richardson, pp. 308–9 and 418–19. It was demolished in modern times (after 1870), but is known from drawings to have consisted of a single-arch gate with a blind lower storey and an upper storey with three large windows.

²⁹ Sallustian Palace: the *palatium* was the principal residence in the Gardens of Sallust (*Horti Sallustiani*), located in the Augustan *Regio VI* (they were bounded by the Via Salaria Nuova on the east, and the Aurelian Walls, northwards from the Porta Salaria), the most famous estate of its kind in Rome, which had been laid out by the historian Sallust (first century BC); it became imperial property during the principate of Tiberius, and was used as a residence by several emperors, particularly Vespasian and Aurelian (see n. 45). The remains of the palace are represented by a ruined pavilion now located between the Porta Salaria and the Via XX Settembre. Many famous works of art (such as the statue of the 'Dying Gaul') were recovered from this pavilion. See Richardson, pp. 202–3 with figs. 44–5, and G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Salusti / Salustianum', *LTUR* IV, pp. 46–8, and, for the Gardens of Sallust, see Platner-Ashby, pp. 271–2; Richardson, *ibid.*; and P. Innocenti and M. C. Leotta, 'Horti Sallustiani', *LTUR* III, pp. 79–81, with figs. 49–53.

humility and modesty, taking her hand, kissed her hands. But she³⁰ despised that action.

17. And while they were all weeping for joy, this was reported to Bishop Gaius, who (was living) next to the dwelling of his church, which he had built next to the Sallustian Palace, because he was living there. And coming quickly to Gabinius, the priest, expecting that the time had arrived for his martyrdom, he arrived in a state of agitation. But he entered with such great display, that on his entrance everyone fell to the floor. The blessed Gaius said to them: 'Be resolute, in the name of the Lord.' At that same time he uttered a prayer, saying: 'Let us pray. Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who sent to all of us our Lord Jesus Christ for the sake of salvation and eternal life, so that you could snatch us from the shadows of the world: grant constancy of faith to these your servants, because You reign forever and ever.' And they all replied in the one spirit, 'Amen'. And they listened to Gaius, the bishop, while sitting down; Susanna, however, never wished to sit down with them, but remained standing while she was praying.

18. Then Bishop Gaius said: 'I give thanks to God, brother Maximus, that you have deigned to visit us.' Maximus replied and said, 'I undeservedly came to you, yet I shall kiss your feet. You know well the reason why I came.' Bishop Gaius says: 'Explain to us.' Maximus replied, saying: 'Diocletian the Augustus, our relative, sent me to Claudius, my brother, because he heard that he was detained by illness, since he had sent him to seek the daughter of Gabinius, the priest, as a consort for his adoptive son, Maximian the Caesar. For that reason I have dared to come to you. That is the reason why I was sent here.' Bishop Gaius said: 'This girl has already accepted Christ as her bridegroom, from God, the Father Almighty. This you should know.' Maximus replied, and said: 'Whatever is given by God, is eternal.'

19. Bishop Gaius said: 'You too, therefore: receive everlasting life.' Maximus says to him: 'And what is everlasting life?' Claudius replied: 'Just as I understood it (to be).' Maximus replied: 'What you truly understood, I desire as well; and yet our family ought not to be distanced from the exalted position of the Augusti.' Bishop Gaius says to him: 'We urge you, to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, the everlasting Son of God. Because this "exalted position", which we see, is known to be temporary; but that which we are preaching is everlasting: it is innocent and lovable.' On hearing this, Maximus received it with joy. Bishop Gaius says to him: 'You know, brother, everything which we abandon, which we said to you, what great things we entrust to you, and we hope for nothing other than our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we live and rejoice.' Maximus replied and said: 'Do not hesitate, my lord, (with respect) to me, but bring about in me what you know: do quickly what you

³⁰ Reading *Ille* with Mombritius (the Bollandists print *Ille* here).

have done in yourselves.’ Then he imposed on Maximus a fast, and asked that he walk (back) to his house.

20. Maximus, returning to his home, said nothing to anyone, but he was so moved by fraternal love, by such warmth of affection for Gaius, the bishop, and Gabinius, the priest, that he would prefer death by confessing the Lord. He consulted with them during these days, and within five days he began to sell off his property and distribute (the proceeds) to the Christian poor. After five days he came in a purified state and threw himself at the feet of Bishop Gaius, saying: ‘I beseech you, my lord, that you not hesitate to enlighten me through Him, through Whom you enlightened our brother Claudius, because I felt remorse in my heart for our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom you are preaching, from the day when you deigned to grant me your words of instruction.’ Bishop Gaius says to him: ‘Incline your heart, therefore, in invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Maximus replied, and said: ‘I, a poor wretch, pray to your holiness, that you save my soul, and snatch me away from the shadowy depths of idol-worship, and deign to lead me to the true Light.’ Bishop Gaius said: ‘Listen to me, brother, if you believe with all your heart and renounce the shows of Satan.’ Maximus replied: ‘I renounced them once, because I wish to live by your example.’ Then Gabinius, the priest, catechized him, and revealed all the sacraments to him. And Bishop Gaius performed (his duties) according to custom, and baptized him; and, lifting him up from the basin, anointed him with the sacrament of chrism, and made an offering to the Lord [i.e. mass] on his behalf, and they all participated; and from that same day they all began to live together, in happiness and hymn-singing.

21. Now Maximus was selling off his property every night through the agency of his friend Thrason, a very Christian man who wore the toga,³¹ who secretly concerned himself with the public, having in his heart a deep reverence for the Christian religion: Gaius, the bishop, had baptized him many years before. In adumbrating the achievements of martyrs he honoured them,³² and at night he distributed everything to the Christian poor, by circulating among city streets, prisons and holding cells.

³¹ That Thrason is *togatus* indicates that he was a Roman citizen, not a foreigner (which his Greek name might suggest). The name is probably meant to suggest the Thrason who was the founder of the cemetery of that name on the Via Salaria Nuova (on which see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 48–9). A Thrason also figures in a similar role in the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.2–3, 8).

³² The Latin here is opaque (*qui magis gesta sanctorum martyrum colligens ornabat*). Lanéry takes it to mean that Thrason was engaged in collecting and putting into writing the *acta* of the martyrs (‘Hagiographie’, p. 149: ‘il s’occupait également de collecter et de mettre en forme les Actes des martyrs’); but *gesta* need not refer to written *acta*; it can simply mean what the martyrs did, their activities.

22. At that same time, a fortnight later, a rumour was reported to Diocletian the emperor by a certain pagan, a principal assistant (*adiutor*)³³ to the Count of the Privy Purse (*Comes rei privatae*) named Arsicius, as it were for his own advancement, as follows:³⁴ 'Most sacred Emperor, ever Augustus, a mighty rumour is circulating concerning your servant the Count of the Privy Purse (*Comes rei privatae*), to the effect that he is providing food for many needy persons. Many people report him doing this as evidence of his humanity.'³⁵ Diocletian said to Arsicius: 'Explain to me, from what source he is known to have this alimony.' Arsicius replied, and said: 'Most sacred Emperor, victorious Augustus: if it is permitted to speak, I will tell you.' Diocletian said: 'You may speak in confidence.' Arsicius said: 'He is selling his property as a financial settlement, and thence he is seen to do this. For he is known to be a Christian, having been converted by Gaius and Gabinius.' When he had heard this, Diocletian kept it to himself, and said to his wife Serena that he had sought the daughter of Gabinius as a wife for Maximian. On hearing this, Serena was comforted, and gave thanks to God, because she was secretly a Christian.³⁶ Serena Augusta replied: 'Do whatever has been enjoined on you by the supernal majesty.'

23. Then Diocletian the Augustus despised his wife, and summoned a certain Julius, a cruel pagan, and, taking counsel with him, said: 'I sent my dear colleague [Claudius] to a certain man to seek a wife for my son; but they—who were my own (relatives)—scorned my orders, and indeed have even become Christians.' Julius replied and said: 'All those who scorn the emperors, even when they issue unjust commands, are to be punished. (I say to) Your merciful and wise self: what is just and what has been commanded is to be done. Whence it ought to be brought to a conclusion:³⁷ let these scorners³⁸ be punished!' And Diocletian, the Augustus, ordered Julius to send soldiers and

³³ The principal assistant (*adiutor*) in the office of the *Comes rei privatae*, as in any of the major *officia*, was a relatively senior official, ranking beneath only the *princeps officii* and the *cornicularius*; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 567 and 575, and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, pp. 41 and 163.

³⁴ A very confused sentence; since it is clear from the sequel that Arsicius is reporting directly to Diocletian, I have omitted the word *Maximiano* following *divulgata est fama*, which implies that the rumour was reported to Maximian, not Diocletian. In the sequel Arsicius is clearly addressing Diocletian ('*Princeps et semper Auguste*': at this point only Diocletian is Augustus; Maximian is Caesar). But the syntax is characteristically so garbled that it is not always possible to divine the author's intention.

³⁵ Reading *famam...facientem* with Mombricitus, where the Bollandists print *fama...facienti*.

³⁶ Diocletian did not have a wife named Serena (his wife was named Prisca); possibly the name was suggested by the fact that the wife of Stilicho (the *magister militum* of Theodosius and Honorius) was named Serena, on whom see *PLRE* I, p. 824.

³⁷ Reading *adducendum* for the transmitted *adductum* (Mombricitus and the Bollandists), and preferring Mombricitus' reading *euolutione* to the Bollandists' *evolutione* (which I do not understand).

³⁸ Reading *contemptores* with Mombricitus, instead of the Bollandists' *contemptibiles*.

arrest them all, except that they were not to arrest Gaius, the bishop. But they did arrest Gabinius, the priest, with his daughter Susanna; and Claudius, with his wife and sons; and <Maximus, whom> he ordered³⁹ to be deported to the city of Cuma⁴⁰ and to be burned alive there; and Claudius and Praepedigna and Alexander and <Cutia>⁴¹ to be thrown into the waters of the river at Ostia. But he had Gabinius, the priest, and Susanna bound over in chains in a holding cell.

24. After fifty-five days, Diocletian gave the order to Serena his wife that Susanna was to be brought to her, so that she might change her behaviour. When she saw the soldiers coming for her, Susanna prayed to the Lord: 'O Lord, do not abandon Your servant.' And when Susanna had been brought in to Serena Augusta, Serena honoured her as she entered. Susanna threw herself on the floor, and Serena said to Susanna: 'May Christ our Lord rejoice in you.' And when she noticed that she had invoked Christ, she said this: 'I give thanks to my God, that His dominions are to be found everywhere.' And she remained with Serena Augusta for many days. During this period Susanna did not cease from hymns and prayers by day and night, persistently giving thanks to the Lord. The emperor Diocletian, continually hoping that through Serena Susanna would be persuaded to marriage with his son Maximian,⁴² sent one of

³⁹ The text as transmitted becomes incomprehensible at this point: that of Mombricitus reads 'sed tenuerunt Gaunium presbyterum cum filia sua Susanna et Claudium cum uxore et filiis: quos iussit deportari in ciuitatem Chomos: ibique incendio concremari. Claudium et Prepidignam et Alexandrum et Maximum in Hostia in rheuma iactari' (p. 557), and that of the Bollandists, 'Sed tenuerunt Gabinium Presbyterum cum filia sua Susanna, et Claudium cum uxore sua vel filiis, et deportari in civitate Comos, quos iussit incendia concremari: Claudium et Praepedignam et Alexandrum et Maximum in Ostia in rheuma iactari' (p. 65). The syntax of the text of Mombricitus states that Diocletian ordered Gabinius, Susanna, and Claudius with his family to be deported (*quos iussit deportari*) to *Comos*; but this is nonsense, because the following sentence (both texts) tells us that Gabinius and Susanna were detained in a holding cell. Given that the words *quos iussit* are missing from the Bollandists' text, it is possible that they represent an addition by the scribe of Mombricitus' text: but whereas the addition restores coherent syntax, it imports nonsense. I have emended the text so as to incorporate a punishment for Maximus (by adding *Maximum: quem iussit* between *et* and *deportari*, and emending *quos* to *quem* after *Comos*), namely that Maximus was sent to Cuma to be burned alive there. In the following clause, I emend *Maximum* to *Cutiam*, with the result that Claudius and all his family were dispatched to Ostia to be drowned in the Tiber there.

⁴⁰ The editions here read *Chomos* (Mombricitus) and *Comos* (Bollandists), neither of which makes any sense in context, on the assumption that *C(h)omos* is a corruption of *Comum* (i.e. Como near Milan): for what would be the point of sending a criminal to faraway Como to be burned alive? The Bollandists convincingly suggest that *Comos* is a corruption of *Cumas*, i.e. Cuma in the Campi Flegrei, near Naples: a place much closer to Rome than Como, and which by its very name carries the suggestion of burning.

⁴¹ Both texts here read *Maximum*; but since the name occurs among the members of the family of Claudius, it is reasonable to assume that the scribe—probably prompted by the corruption discussed in the previous footnote—replaced *Cutiam* with *Maximum*, without realizing that he had imported nonsense to the narrative.

⁴² More textual confusion: in the edition of the Bollandists, the name *Maximinus* has now supplanted that of *Maximianus* (possibly through confusion with the name of Maximinus Daia, on whom see n. 14); in what follows I retain the name 'Maximian'.

his household, named Curtius, to Serena, (reporting) the emperor Diocletian the Augustus (as) saying: 'Let us join the girl to my son, Maximian, through your intercession.' Serena said to Curtius: 'Unless there is goodwill, (such a) union is not harmonious, because I do not know the girl's love for association with your [Diocletian's] son. But the girl remains tearfully in prayer by day and night in praise of her God: she does not cease from chanting psalms, nor does her father, Gabinius.' This was reported to Diocletian the Augustus.

25. Then Diocletian the Augustus, greatly enraged, gave orders to Maximian that she [Susanna] be recalled to the house of her father, Gabinius, saying: 'Let our palace not be polluted; but use her as you wish in the house of her father, and then abandon her.' At that same time he sent her [Susanna] home.⁴³ Serena addressed (Susanna), saying: 'He Who released His servant Susanna first,⁴⁴ let Him also release you, and may He be your helper.' Susanna, arriving home in the company of two women, entered the house and, throwing herself on the floor, began to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ. That night Maximian, coming to her (house), entered into the bedchamber where Susanna was praying; and, as he entered, the angel of the Lord appeared above Susanna; he, seeing such great brilliance of light, grew afraid, and fled quickly back to the palace, and did not touch her, and reported all this to his father, Diocletian the Augustus. Diocletian the Augustus said: 'This is not (natural) behaviour,⁴⁵ unless it is sorcery.' And he sent Curtius, and ordered that he listen to her [Susanna] attentively. When he arrived, Curtius began to be more and more afraid.

26. At that same time, Diocletian went in to Serena, his wife, and began an argument with her concerning Christ's coming, and the worship of idols; and when he had been reproached⁴⁶ by Serena, he turned his attention to the teaching of Susanna, saying to Serena: 'Why did you bring it about, that this wise and beautiful girl will not consent to marriage with my son?' Serena said: 'Because she chose a better (path), which our son related to us in his report—the eternal light, which Maximian would not keep quiet about.' In a rage, Diocletian the Augustus sent for a certain Macedonius, a sacrilegious pagan, to whom he gave these orders: 'Compel her in her own house to offer sacrifices

⁴³ Recall that Susanna had been staying with Serena; she is now sent home so that Maximian can rape her with impunity.

⁴⁴ The reference is apparently to the Old Testament story of Susanna and the Elders. This Susanna was falsely accused of adultery by two elders, but was saved by divine intervention, and the elders were put to death: Dan. 13: 6–63.

⁴⁵ Reading *genius* for the transmitted *genus* (which I do not understand).

⁴⁶ Reading *conviciatus* ('reproached') for the transmitted *convictus* ('convinced'): for it is nonsense to say that Diocletian was convinced (*convictus*) by Serena's account of Christ's coming and the worship of idols—such a putative conviction is belied by his vengeful behaviour in the following chapters.

to the gods; but do it secretly, because of the unpopularity of our imperial person.'

27. On arrival, Macedonius entered her house in the region of the Sallustian Gardens,⁴⁷ and began to compel her to sacrifice: he had brought a golden idol⁴⁸ of Jupiter, and a three-footed table. When Susanna saw this, she blew on it, and, bending her knees, said to the Lord: 'O Lord, let my eyes not see the treasures of demons; but comfort Your servant.' Then Macedonius said to her: 'Get up from the ground, and worship the god of Caesar.' As Susanna raised her head to heaven, suddenly the image was nowhere to be seen. Then Macedonius (thinking she had stolen the golden statuette) said to her: 'Your love of gold seduced you, and in the rush of avarice it exposed⁴⁹ you; yet I thank you, because you would not have stolen it except through love of the gods.' And she, making the sign of the Cross on her chest, said: 'The Lord sent His angel, and he took it from in front of me, so that my eyes would not be polluted.'

28. At that moment one of the servants of Macedonius came in, and reported that a golden Jupiter was lying in the square in front of the Sallustian Palace. Inflamed with anger, Macedonius stripped off her clothes with his own hands, and began to beat her with staves. Susanna, rejoicing, said: 'Glory be to You, O Lord.' Macedonius said to her: 'Consider carefully, and sacrifice.' But she, making the sign of the Cross on her chest, said: 'I wish to offer myself as a sacrifice to my God.' At the same time Macedonius reported to Diocletian the Augustus what had happened, and how the idol of Jupiter had been thrown out and broken up in the square, and then recovered. Then Diocletian the Augustus ordered that she be put to the sword in her own home, next to the house of Bishop Gaius. She was struck down in her own home, and gave up her spirit.

29. When Serena Augusta heard this, she came at night and recovered the body of St Susanna the martyr, and with her veil wiped up the blood which she had shed in the same place, and put it in a silver reliquary in her palace,⁵⁰ where she did not cease from praying (before it) on secret occasions by day and night; with her own hands she prepared the body of St Susanna with linen and spices, and placed it next to the bodies of saints in the cemetery of

⁴⁷ On the Sallustian Gardens (*Horti Sallustiani*) and the Sallustian palace, see n. 29.

⁴⁸ The very rare form *deunculus* is the diminutive of *deus* (rather than, as might be supposed, of *deunx*), and means 'little god', hence 'idol'. *TLL* V/1, col. 868 cites only two occurrences of *deunculus*, both of them in glossaries (*CGL* IV, col. 369, and V, col. 468).

⁴⁹ The transmitted form *clarefecit* implies a verb *clarefacio*. No such verb is attested in *TLL* or Souter, but cf. Du Cange, s.v. 'clarefacere', who notes its occurrence in several medieval Italian charters. In any case, *clarefacio* is distinct from the better-attested form *clarifico* (the 3rd person pret. sing. which would be *clarificauit*), on which see *TLL* III, cols. 1286–7.

⁵⁰ The 'palace of Serena' (*palatium Serenae*) was possibly imagined as one of the imperial residences (including the 'Sallustian Palace': n. 28) lying between the Porta Salaria and the present Pincio; see G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Serenae', *LTUR* IV, pp. 48–9.

Alexander⁵¹ in a crypt next to St Alexander, in a catacomb⁵² near to the town of the brickworks,⁵³ on 11 August. From that same day Bishop Gaius began to go into the very house where she had been struck down by the sword, and offer the sacrifice [i.e. mass] on the people's behalf to his Lord God, in commemoration of St Susanna. Because the house of Bishop Gaius was adjacent to the house of the blessed Gabinius, the priest, from that time forth it had great significance for the Christians, and a station church (*statio*) was established in 'the two houses' (*in duas domos*),⁵⁴ which remains there up until the present time. This took place in the sixth region of Rome,⁵⁵ next to the street of Mamurius (*vicus Mamuri*),⁵⁶ in front of the *forum Sallustii*,⁵⁷ with the Lord reigning over the entire world, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ, forever and ever. Amen.

⁵¹ The cemetery in question is located at the village of Coazzo, at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana; it is described in the seventh-century itinerary of Malmesbury as follows: 'at the seventh mile of the same road rests the holy pope Alexander, with Eventius and Theodulus' (see Appendix IV (c) [§5], p. 665). See Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Santuario martiriale e territorio nella diocesi di "Nomentum"': *idem, I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 202–413; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 79–83. Pope Alexander and his companions Eventius and Theodulus are the subject of no. XXXII.

⁵² For the meaning 'catacomb' (*arenarium*), see X.26, with n. 40.

⁵³ The transmitted text (*iuxta civitatem Figlinae*) apparently refers to a place known as 'the town of the brickworks' (for *figlinae* meaning literally 'clay district', hence 'brickworks', see E. Champlin, 'Figlinae Marcianae', p. 258); the same place is apparently mentioned in some manuscripts of the life of Pope Silvester in the *Liber pontificalis*: 'circa civitatem Figlinae' (ed. Mommsen, p. 63 *ad app.*; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 180; trans. Davis, p. 22, who follows those manuscripts which read *Fidenae* here). In favour of identification with an area lying between the Via Nomentana and the Via Salaria Nuova, see T. Ashby, 'The Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna, III', [*Papers of the*] *British School at Rome* 4 (1907), 1–159, at p. 13, and esp. D. De Francesco, 'Figlinae Civitas', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, p. 251. For what are probably the same *figlinae*, see the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (no. XXII.2, with n. 31), where they are said to be located near to the Via Salaria Nuova.

⁵⁴ On the station church *ad duas domos*, see A. Bonanni, 'Duae domus', *LTUR* II, p. 217. The church *ad duas domos* is identical with the *titulus Susannae*, as we learn from the entry for Pope Sergius in the *Liber pontificalis*: 'titulus sanctae Susannae, qui et Duae Domus vocatur' (ed. Mommsen, p. 210; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 371; trans. Davis, p. 85). According to the Gregorian sacramentaries and the gospel lectionary of Würzburg, station mass was celebrated there by the pope on the Saturday following the third Sunday in Lent (see Appendix V (d) and (e), pp. 671, 673).

⁵⁵ The reference is to the sixth of the fourteen civil regions established by Augustus; *Regio VI* was known by the name of its principal thoroughfare, the *Alta Semita*, on which the church of St Susanna was located.

⁵⁶ The name of the *vicus Mamuri* derives from a statue of the legendary bronze-smith Mamurius Veturius, which was set up near the temple of Quirinus, hence on the Quirinal in *Regio VI*; the street in question probably ran south-east from the Piazza S. Bernardo on the *Alta Semita*. See Platner–Ashby, p. 123; Richardson, p. 89; and F. Coarelli, 'Clivus Mamuri', *LTUR* I, pp. 282–3.

⁵⁷ The *forum Sallustii* was probably near the present-day Piazza Fiume; from here one crossed to the *palatium Sallustii* in the vast 'Gardens of Sallust' (on which see n. 29); on the *forum*, see G. De Spirito, 'Forum Sallustii', *LTUR* II, pp. 345–6.

XII

Pope Callistus

c.480 × 500; relevant to the cemetery of Calepodius (Via Aurelia)

Callistus was a well-attested early third-century pope of Rome (217–22).¹ From the *Liber pontificalis* we learn that he was born in the region of the *Urbs Ravennatium* in Trastevere; that he built a basilica there; that he was buried in the cemetery of Calepodius at the third mile of the Via Aurelia; and that he founded another cemetery on the Via Appia, which bears his own name.² Note that none of these historical sources states that Callistus was a martyr, even though his name is recorded against 14 October in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 (see Appendix I, p. 636). From other sources we know that the election of Callistus was contested by Hippolytus, who was then resident in Rome, and who became a very bitter antipope. In his *Philosophoumena* or *Refutatio omnium haeresium* [CPG 1899], Hippolytus has left a very unflattering portrait of Callistus; he states that Callistus was ‘a man cunning in wickedness’ who obtained the papacy by bribery (ix. 6), and who embezzled church funds (ix. 9).³ Unsurprisingly, none of the allegations of Hippolytus—which were evidently motivated by personal and self-righteous jealousy—figure in the present *passio*.⁴

The martyrdom of Pope Callistus is described in the present *passio* as follows. In the days of the emperors Macrinus (217–18) and Alexander Severus (222–35), a fire at the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, followed by a lightning bolt which killed four pagan priests, caused the priests to request that the gods be propitiated by sacrifices, because the cause of these divine

¹ His pontificate is noted by Eusebius, *HE* vi. 21; see *EP* I, pp. 237–46 [E. Prinzivalli].

² See *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 21; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 141; trans. Davis, p. 7. As will become clear, many of these details derive from the present *passio*.

³ Ed. P. Wendland, *Hippolytus Werke*, III. *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, GCS XXVI (Leipzig, 1916), pp. 240, 241–2. On the relevance of Hippolytus’ account to understanding the archaeological context, see G. B. de Rossi, ‘Esame archeologico e critico della storia di S. Callisto narrata nel libro nono dei “Filosofumeni”’, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 4th ser. 4 (1886), 1–33, 65–72, and 77–100.

⁴ Listed *BHL* 1523 and *CPL* 2173; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 115–16; *DACL* II/2, cols. 1657–64 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* III, cols. 680–9 [G. Ferretto]; Verrando, ‘La *Passio Callisti*’; and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 154–60.

disasters was deemed to be the presence in Rome of impious Christians; one of the consuls, named Palmatius, discovered Pope Callistus and his congregation at prayer in Trastevere, near the *Urbs Ravennatium*, and assumed that they were to blame for the disasters (c. 1). Palmatius came with his soldiers to Trastevere and the congregation of Callistus, among whom was Calepodius, the priest; when the soldiers went in, they were struck blind, whereupon Palmatius fled in terror to the emperor, who decreed that the entire populace of Rome should proceed to the Capitol and sacrifice in the temple of Mercury (c. 2). When a virgin of the temple shouted out that the god of the Christians was the true God, Palmatius fled to the Trastevere and asked to be baptized by Callistus, which was duly done (c. 3). When it was reported to the emperor that Palmatius had become a Christian, he was arrested and remanded in custody in the Mamertine prison; after being interrogated by the emperor, he was handed over into the keeping of a senator named Simplicius (c. 4). While there, Callistus was able to cure Blanda, the bedridden wife of one Felix; Felix requested that both he and Blanda be baptized by Callistus, and Simplicius, on witnessing the miracle, also requested to be baptized; on hearing of these baptisms, the emperor ordered that all those who had received baptism were to be decapitated, and their heads displayed at the various gates of Rome (c. 5). The first to be executed was Calepodius, whose body was dragged through the city and then thrown into the Tiber; his body was recovered and buried in his own cemetery on the Via Aurelia (c. 6). Alexander now began actively to seek out Callistus, who was arrested near the *Urbs Ravennatium*, beaten, and then thrown into prison (c. 7). Another prisoner there, named Privatus, was severely afflicted with sores, but Callistus managed miraculously to cure him; on hearing this, Alexander ordered Privatus to be beaten to death with lead-weighted whips, and Callistus to be thrown out of the upper storey of a house and drowned in a cistern (c. 8). A priest named Asterius retrieved his body and buried it in the cemetery of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia; Asterius was himself arrested and thrown into the Tiber, whence his body was retrieved downstream at Ostia and buried there by Christians (c. 9).

Although there must be some doubt about whether Callistus was genuinely a martyr, given the silence on this matter by Eusebius and the *Liber pontificalis*, the fact remains that Callistus is recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* against 14 October, where he is said to be 'on the Via Aurelia, at the third mile' (Appendix I, p. 636), and this information is repeated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, save that the words 'at the third mile' have been replaced by 'in the cemetery of Calepodius' (Appendix III, p. 657). One of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum urbis Romae*, adds the information that Callistus was venerated there in a church: 'Afterwards on the same road [Via Aurelia] you will arrive at a church: there you will find St Callistus, pope and martyr' (Appendix IV (a) [§12], p. 662). From these various testimonies it seems clear that Pope Callistus was buried in a cemetery

at the third mile of the Via Aurelia; that this cemetery originally had no name but by the mid-fifth century was known by the name of Calepodius;⁵ and that by the seventh century at latest, and probably as early as the pontificate of Julius (337–52), a church dedicated to St Callistus was built over the cemetery.⁶ The whole question was brilliantly illuminated in 1959–60, when Aldo Nestori excavated the cemetery and was able to identify, by means of inscriptions and frescoes, the very crypts of Callistus and Calepodius.⁷ Nestori's discovery has been described by an eminent authority as 'one of the most important ever made in the study of the Roman catacombs'.⁸ In any case, Nestori's discovery shows how the original tomb of Pope Callistus was enlarged and embellished by frescoes in succeeding centuries, up to the time when it is mentioned in the pilgrim itineraries.⁹

The present *passio* is probably to be dated to the end of the fifth century: it was laid under contribution by the authors of the *passiones* of Pope Marcellus (XX) and of Marius and Martha (XXII), both of which date from the mid-sixth century, as well as by the compiler of the first edition of the *Liber pontificalis*, writing c.530. And since it makes no reference whatsoever to the issues which animated the so-called 'Laurentian schism', which erupted following the election of Pope Symmachus in 498, the *passio* of Pope Callistus was arguably

⁵ The name of the cemetery has been a matter of some discussion among scholars. Amore maintained that it originally had no name, and hence he referred to it simply as 'Il cimitero al III miglio' (*I martiri di Roma*, pp. 276–83); but others have argued that it was known by the name of Calepodius (as in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*), and still others that it was always known by the name of Callistus (notably E. Josi, 'Note di topografia cimiteriale romana. Il sepolcro del papa Giulio I e il cimitero di Callisto sulla via Aurelia', in *Miscellanea Msgr. Giulio Belvedere* (Vatican City, 1954), pp. 321–33): see the summary of the discussion by Bonfiglio *apud* Amore, *ibid.*, pp. 281–2. The present *passio* states unambiguously that Callistus was buried 'in the cemetery of Calepodius, on the Via Aurelia' (c. 9).

⁶ The attribution of the basilica to Pope Julius derives from the 'Liberian Catalogue', where it is stated that Julius built five churches: on the Via Portuense; on the Via Flaminia; near the Forum of Trajan; in Trastevere *iuxta Callistum*, and on the Via Aurelia *ad Callistum*. See Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 82–3; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 167–9; Verrando, 'L'attività edilizia di papa Giulio I', pp. 1021–61, and *idem*, 'Callistum (ad), basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 50–4, who argues that the church *ad Callistum* on the Via Aurelia was a partially hypogean basilica at the site of the cemetery of Callistus/Calepodius.

⁷ Nestori, 'La catacomba di Calepodio' and *idem*, 'Ultimi lavori a Calepodio', *RACr* 61 (1985), 237–53; and see also the more recent assessments of Nestori's discovery by Verrando, 'Analisi topografica degli antichi cimiteri', and *idem*, 'Cal(l)isti coemeterium (via Aurelia)', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 44–50; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 237–9; A. Granelli, 'Osservazioni sulla regione primitiva del cimitero di Calepodio', in Flocchi Nicolai and Guyon, *Origine delle catacombe romane*, pp. 237–57; and Minasi, *La tomba di Callisto*, pp. 11–22, with figs. 6–8 (on Nestori's discovery of the crypt of Callistus).

⁸ L. Reekmans, 'Les cryptes des martyrs romains. État de la recherche', in *Atti del IX Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana, Roma 21–27 settembre 1975*, 2 vols. (Vatican City, 1978), I, pp. 275–302, at 300.

⁹ On the decoration of the tomb, esp. the frescoes (which were evidently inspired by the present *passio*), see Minasi, *La tomba di Callisto*, esp. pp. 23–8 on the cycle of frescoes.

composed before that date. For these reasons, Verrando, followed by Lanéry, suggests a date of composition in the last decade(s) of the fifth century.¹⁰

Text. The *passio* of Pope Callistus enjoyed a relatively wide circulation during the Middle Ages: *BHLms* lists some 105 manuscripts, to which Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further thirty-four.¹¹ There are only two editions of the work, each of which is based on the text of a single manuscript: one by Mombricitus (I, pp. 268–71), and one by the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Octobris VI* [1794], pp. 439–41. I have translated the text as printed by the Bollandists (whose chapter-numbering I adopt), but have compared their text with that of Mombricitus throughout.

1. In the days of Macrinus and Alexander (Severus),¹² part of the Capitol, on its south side, was burned by a divinely-sent conflagration, and within the temple of Jupiter¹³ the golden left hand (of the statue) fell off and was liquefied. Soothsayers and priests came to Alexander, saying that their gods should be placated by sacrifices.¹⁴ Hearing this, Alexander ordered that the gods should be consulted. And while they were sacrificing, suddenly, from a clear sky, on Jupiter's day [Thursday], four priests of these idols were struck dead with lightning, and the altar of Jupiter was consumed in fire: and the day grew dark, and all the Roman people fled outside the town walls.¹⁵ And while the people were dispersing in flight, they came across the Tiber to a temple (*templum*)¹⁶

¹⁰ Verrando, 'La *Passio Callisti*', pp. 1048–51; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 158–9.

¹¹ 'Hagiographie', p. 157, n. 336.

¹² Macrinus was briefly emperor from 11 April 217 to 8 June 218; Alexander Severus was emperor from 11 March 222 to 18/19 March 235. Between them came Elagabalus (218–222). The fact that the author of the *passio* names only Macrinus and Alexander is repeated in the biography of Callistus in the *Liber pontificalis*, which reads: 'He [Callistus] was bishop in the time of Macrinus and Theodoliobollus [a scribal corruption of Heliogabalus] from the consulship of Antonius and of Alexander' (ed. Mommsen, p. 21; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 141; trans. Davis, p. 7).

¹³ The great temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus stood on the lower crest of the Capitol. It was destroyed by fire under Titus in AD 80 (Cassius Dio, *Hist.* lxvi. 24), and was lavishly rebuilt by Domitian (Suetonius, *Vita Domitiani*, c. 5). It was considered by Ammianus Marcellinus to be the finest temple in Rome (*Res gestae* xxii. 16. 12). See Richardson, pp. 221–4, with fig. 19, and S. De Angeli, 'Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus (fasi tardo-reppublicane e di età imperiale)', *LTUR* III, pp. 148–53.

¹⁴ The presence of soothsayers was a marked feature of the reign of Elagabalus, according to SHA, 'Antoninus Elagabalus', viii. 2: 'omne denique magorum genus aderat illi operabaturque cottidie, hortante illo et gratias dis agente'.

¹⁵ As Verrando ('La *Passio Callisti*', p. 1063, n. 114) notes, the temple of Jupiter was struck by lightning in 9 BC, and destroyed by fire in AD 80 (see n. 13); Jerome, *Chronica*, records that the Capitol was struck by lightning in AD 189–90 (*PL* XXVII, cols. 633–4).

¹⁶ It is not clear whether *templum* here refers to a pagan temple (dedication unspecified), or to a Christian church. There were two pagan temples in Trastevere (M. Maischberger, 'Transtiberim', *LTUR* V, pp. 77–83, with fig. 52): the *aedes Fontis* (on which see J. Aronen, 'Fons / Fontus, ara, aedes', *LTUR* II, p. 256), and the temple of Fors Fortuna at the first mile of the Via Campana (on which see F. Coarelli, 'Fortis Fortunae Fanum, Templum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 270–1).

near the *Urbs Ravennatium*,¹⁷ and they heard in a certain dwelling¹⁸ a multitude of Christians chanting psalms; among them was Callistus, the bishop, with his clergy.¹⁹ When one of the consuls, named Palmatius, heard the multitude of Christians assembled at one location, he reported it to Alexander, saying: 'Great emperor, the sign [i.e. the lightning bolt which killed the priests] was given for the reason that the city is defiled. If it were to be cleansed, we could rejoice once more in the glory of your exalted station and the republic would grow bright.' Alexander said: 'Let it be purified. But explain to me, what is the means of purification?' Palmatius replied: 'That there be no more impious persons.' Alexander said: 'Who are these impious persons?' Palmatius replied: 'Christians'. Alexander said: 'I have given the order once and again, that wheresoever they be found, they either be punished or else offer libations to the immortal gods.'²⁰ Palmatius replied, saying: 'Your Excellency, I heard, when I was saddened because of the sign which had been given, how a multitude of Christians in the region of Trastevere was singing out in chants and incantations: whence it is not surprising, if this was the reason for the sign.'

2. Alexander said to him: 'Accept the authority that, wherever you find them, you drag them to sacrifice, to please the gods; or else without doubt you afflict them with choice tortures.' Then Palmatius, having accepted this authority and having assembled a multitude of soldiers, came to Trastevere, where a multitude of Christians had assembled with St Callistus. Among them was Calepodius, an old priest.²¹ And arriving at a certain dwelling, ten soldiers went in; and when they had all entered, these ten soldiers were suddenly struck blind. Calepodius, the old priest, addressed them and said, 'My sons, who are

¹⁷ The *Urbs* (or: *Castra*) *Ravennatium* was the barracks of the imperial Ravenna navy when it was stationed in Rome; see C. Lega, 'Castra Ravennatium', *LTUR* I, pp. 254–5. It may be significant that in the present *passio* the site is referred to as the *Urbs Ravennatium*, whereas in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.1) it is called the *Castra Ravennatium*. It was possibly the frequency with which the site is mentioned in the present *passio* which led the compiler of the *Liber pontificalis* to deduce that Callistus was 'born in the region of the *Urbs Ravennatium*' (see above).

¹⁸ The word *cenaculum*, and with it the notion of the assembly of Christians, probably derives from Acts 20: 8–9, where St Paul is described preaching in an upper room in a house in Troas. The present assembly seems to have taken place on an upper floor (cf. c. 2: the blinded soldiers 'descended' (*descenderunt*)). The word is also used of the assembly of Christians in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.5), where, however, an upper floor does not seem to be in question.

¹⁹ These words recur nearly verbatim in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.5).

²⁰ There is no evidence whatsoever that Alexander Severus was a persecutor of Christians; on the contrary, according to his biography in *SHA*, he allowed Christians to live at peace (c. 22: 'Christianos esse passus est'), and even wished to build a church dedicated to Christ (c. 43: 'Christo templum facere voluit eumque inter deos recipere'). Note also that, according to Eusebius (*HE* vi. 21. 3–4), Alexander's mother, Julia Mamaea, invited Origen to spend time at the imperial court.

²¹ The name Calepodius was probably taken by the author of the *passio* from a memorial inscription in the cemetery of that name at the third mile of the Via Aurelia, where Callistus was buried; see Verrando, 'La *Passio Callisti*', pp. 1060–1.

you looking for?’²² They shouted out, saying, ‘Light some lamps for us, because this place has become dark to us.’ Calepodius the priest said: ‘God, Who sees all things, has Himself blinded your eyes.’ Then, feeling their way they descended, blinded. When Palmatius saw these things, shaken with terror, he fled and reported everything to Alexander. That same day Alexander ordered the soldiers who had been blinded to be brought into his presence. And when he had examined the soldiers, he began to shout out: ‘O good citizens, witness the effects of magic!’ Palmatius replied and said: ‘If this has been accomplished by magic arts, where are the powers of our gods? May your Worship order that they be brought in and sacrifice to the gods, so that our state does not perish through their incantations.’ And Alexander commanded that sacrifice be made to Mercury, and that he be informed of what response it produced. His commandment trickled out to all the populace, that all should hasten to the Capitol from all parts of Rome, so that those who were found in their homes on Mercury’s day [Wednesday] would all be killed. And it was announced by means of a herald that the entire populace, together with the emperor, should assemble at the Capitol without delay; whoever did not hasten there should know that he would suffer capital punishment. On the aforesaid day the entire Roman populace hastened to the Capitol. Palmatius, too, with his entire household, came to the Capitol with pigs and calves [to sacrifice].²³

3. And it happened that, when blood was spilled from the killing of the flocks, and all the priests were chanting incantations, that a virgin of the temple named Juliana, seized by a demon, shouted out: ‘The god of Callistus is the true and living God; He is offended by the pollution of your republic, and will crush all your mortal kingdom, because you do not worship the truth.’ Hearing this, Palmatius ran alone to St Callistus in the barracks of the Ravenna fleet in the region of Trastevere; and in haste he propelled himself and entered the house where an assembly of Christians was gathered, and fell before the feet of St Callistus, saying: ‘I have realized that Jesus Christ is the true God, Whom (even) the demons have confessed today: I implore you through Him, that you liberate me from the cult of demons and stone idols. Baptize me in the manner you are preaching.’ Bishop Callistus said to him: ‘Do not in error ridicule the truth.’ Palmatius replied in tears,

²² The words ‘Who are you looking for?’ (*quem quaeritis?*) are biblical: John 18: 4.

²³ There is perhaps some confusion here: although the populace was summoned to sacrifice to Mercury, on a Wednesday (Mercury’s day: *dies Mercurii*) on the Capitol, there was no temple of Mercury on the Capitol. The only temple in Rome dedicated to Mercury was on the Aventine, not the Capitol, and although no trace of it has ever been found, its existence is reliably attested in a number of sources; see Richardson, p. 252, and M. Andreussi, ‘Mercurius, Aedes’, *LTUR* III, pp. 245–7. The principal temple on the Capitol was dedicated to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus (see n. 13). The author was apparently more concerned to match the god’s name with the day of the week (*Iuppiter* and *dies Iovis*, *Mercurius* and *dies Mercurii*) than with historical accuracy.

saying: 'My lord, I am not ridiculing: because I recognized in the blindness of the soldiers, and in the utterance of the virgin, that my Lord is your Christ.' The old man Calepodius replied and said to the blessed bishop: 'Blessed father, do not deny baptism to someone seeking it.' At the same time he imposed on him a fast of one day, and catechized him; and he blessed him with water brought from the water of a well which was in that house. And having placed Palmatius in a basin, St Callistus the bishop said to him: 'Do you believe with all your heart in God the Father Almighty, creator of all things visible and invisible?' Palmatius replied: 'I believe'. And he said to him: 'And in Jesus Christ His Son?' And again he replied: 'I believe'. And he said to him: 'And in the Holy Ghost, the catholic church, the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the flesh?' And Palmatius shouted out in a loud voice, with tears: 'I believe, my lord'.²⁴ In that same hour he began to shout and to say, 'Truly I saw the Lord Jesus Christ, the true light, Who illuminated me.' And Callistus baptized the entire household of Palmatius, including his wife and his children, and forty-two others of either sex. From that day Palmatius began to distribute all his wealth among poor Christians, seeking out their dwelling-places and crypts, and wherever he found Christians, either in custody or in hiding, he provided food and clothing from his own resources.

4. After thirty-two days, Palmatius was sought by Alexander, to whom it was reported that he was a Christian and was persuading others as well. Then Alexander ordered him to be brought before him. When he had been arrested by the tribune Torquatus, and placed in custody in the Mamertine prison,²⁵ after three days Torquatus reported to Alexander that Palmatius had been remanded in custody. Then Alexander joyfully ordered him to be brought before him. And, bound in chains, Palmatius entered Alexander's presence. When he saw him, he ordered him to be released, and said to him: 'Have you become so mad, O Palmatius, that you abandon our gods, and seek out and worship a dead man?' Palmatius remained silent. Alexander said to him: 'Speak in confidence; don't be afraid.' Palmatius replied, saying: 'If you grant permission, let us speak the truth.' Alexander said to him: 'Except for blaspheming the gods, you may speak.' Palmatius said to him: 'O great Emperor, if you look closely, they are not gods, but are the creation of mortal men. But let Your Worship now recognize who are the gods who ought to be revered. Gods who come into being and are made by mortals: what sort they are, you judge.²⁶ But I, a wretch, beseech Your Magnificence: tell your god to speak, and when

²⁴ This relatively detailed set of baptismal questions is not discussed by Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen'.

²⁵ On the *carcer Mamertinus*, see no. X (p. 266, with n. 40), as well as Verrando, 'La Passio Callisti', p. 1073, n. 175.

²⁶ Identical wording recurs in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.7).

I question him, let him reply. And when that happens, I will not desert the gods whom you mention.' Alexander said to him: 'And how is it that you have worshipped these gods from the cradle, and now you abandon them?' Palmatius replied: 'I behaved like a wretch; now, however, I recognize what is true; for that reason I beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ that He forgive me, because I sinned in ignorance.' At that same time Alexander, smiling, handed him over to a certain senator called Simplicius,²⁷ saying: 'Keep him with you without frightening him, and call him back through gentle persuasion to worship of the gods: the state has need of such a man.' Taking charge of Palmatius, Simplicius the senator clothed him in noble garments and led him to his house. Simplicius instructed his wife and all the adults in the house, that Palmatius was to have the entire house of Simplicius at his disposal. Then Palmatius, occupying himself in fasting and prayers, did not cease from praying in tears to God the Father Almighty and Jesus Christ His Son, in order to do penance for his past error.

5. Approaching him a certain Felix, whose disabled wife had been lying in bed for four years, threw himself at the feet of Palmatius, saying: 'O confessor of our Lord Jesus Christ, pray for your servant my wife Blanda, that she may be freed from her bed of pain, and I may receive baptism with her; for it is a long time that she has been crippled with paralysis, and already our funds have run out.' Then Palmatius, in the presence of the wife of Simplicius, fell to the ground and began in tears to pray with Felix, saying: 'O Lord God, Who illumined Your servant, grant to me the eternal light [which is] Jesus Christ: save your servant Blanda, and raise her up from her bed of pain so that all may recognize that You are the creator of all things.'²⁸ In the same hour Blanda came running on her own feet to the house of Simplicius the senator, saying: 'Baptize me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who held my hand and cured me.' Then Felix began to press the blessed Palmatius to baptize them. In that same hour, blessed Palmatius sent to St Callistus the bishop; and when he arrived he baptized Felix with his wife Blanda. Seeing this, Simplicius fell at the feet of Callistus, asking that he be baptized with all his household. Then St Callistus said confidently: 'Let the Lord gather in the wheat [harvest]'; and he catechized the entire household of Simplicius, and his wife and their sons

²⁷ The existence of a Christian senator in the early third century is almost certainly an anachronism: Eusebius (*HE* vii. 16. 1) could name only one Christian senator in the period before the 260s, at Caesarea, not Rome. On Christians among the senatorial class in the period before Constantine, see Eck, 'Das Eindringen des Christentums', esp. pp. 387–95; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 302–3; and cf. XXIX.3 (a Christian senator named Julius). Verrando ('*La Passio Callisti*', p. 1060) notes that the name Simplicius might have been suggested by that of a Cappadocian martyr who was commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* on the very same day as Callistus—14 October; see Delehay, *Commentarius perpetuus*, p. 556. The name might also have been chosen because Pope Simplicius (468–83) had only recently died when the *passio* was composed.

²⁸ Cf. the similar wording in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.9).

and their slaves: nearly sixty-eight persons of both sexes. The blessed Calepodius the priest, filled with joy, began to shout out in the house of Simplicius: 'Glory be to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who deign to lead Your creation from the shadows to the light, and to free it from error.' Alexander, hearing that a multitude of persons had received baptism through St Callistus the bishop, sent a contingent of soldiers, and arrested all those who had received baptism; he ordered them to undergo capital punishment and their heads to be displayed at various gates of Rome, as an example for Christians.

6. He also arrested the blessed Calepodius, whom he had killed by the sword, and had his body dragged through the city²⁹ on 1 May;³⁰ he had the body thrown into the Tiber above the Lycaonian island.³¹ During these days St Callistus fled with ten of his clergy, and hid himself at night in the house of a certain Pontianus, asking fishermen to look for the body of Calepodius the priest. When they found it they raised it up from the river, and reported this back to Bishop Callistus. He was then filled with joy. Taking up the body he embalmed it with spices and linen, and amidst hymns he buried it in his own cemetery,³² on 10 May.

7. From that day onwards Alexander began actively to seek out St Callistus the bishop. And it was revealed to him that he was in the house of Pontianus³³ near the *Urbs Ravennatium*; and he sent stealthily to Trastevere and arrested him, ordering that he be starved to death in the same place. By the fourth day he had taken nothing in the way of food; rather he was strengthened by fasting and prayers. Hearing this Alexander ordered him to be beaten with staves

²⁹ Verrando ('*La Passio Callisti*', p. 1065) remarks that the execution of Calepodius, especially the dragging of the body through the city, recalls that of Elagabalus, as described in *SHA* 'Antoninus Elagabalus', cc. 8 and 17; but dragging the bodies of criminals—and of disgraced emperors such as Vitellius and Commodus—by hooks, in order eventually to dump them in the Tiber, was a well-attested practice among the Romans; see Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, pp. 162–4, 219–20, and 224–7.

³⁰ There is no entry for a St Calepodius on 1 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III).

³¹ The *insula Lycaonia* is the medieval name for the Tiber Island (*Insula Tiberina*), a tiny island (269 × 67 m.) which is the only island in the Tiber near Rome; it lies south of the Campus Martius, and links the Capitol to the Gianicolo; it was included by Augustus in *Regio XIV* (Trastevere); see Platner-Ashby, pp. 281–2 with pl. 32; Richardson, pp. 209–10; and D. Degraasi, 'Insula Tiberina', *LTUR* III, pp. 99–101, with figs. 62–4. On the occurrence of the island in the *passiones* of Roman martyrs, see G. De Spirito, 'Insula Lycaonia', *LTUR* III, pp. 97–8, and Verrando, '*La Passio Callisti*', pp. 1063–4, and n. 124, who notes that the *insula Lycaonia* also figures in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.4), and that of the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII.14), in addition to the present occurrence.

³² On the cemetery of Calepodius, see n. 7.

³³ Again, one wonders if, as in the case of Calepodius, the name of Pontianus was suggested to the author by the name of the *coemeterium Pontiani*, where SS. Abdon and Sennes were buried (VI.3), and which was located just outside Trastevere on the Via Portuense (see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86, with fig. 13; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 229–36). The cemetery of Pontianus is also mentioned in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.4).

every day, and to be committed to custody in the same place, on the condition that if anyone came to him at night, they would be killed. And when after many days he was wasting away in prison, St Calepodius came to him at night in a vision, and consoled him saying: 'Be resolute, father, because your crown is ready, so you can receive from God a worthy reward for your labour.' St Callistus, intent on prayer, did not cease praying to the Lord.

8. There was there a certain soldier (at the prison) named Privatus, who was covered with sores, and was tormented with pain by day and night. He threw himself at the feet of St Callistus, the bishop, saying: 'Save me from my sores, because I believe in the true and living Lord Jesus Christ, and just as He released Blanda, so He is able to save me, because for a long time I have been engulfed by the pain of my affliction.' St Callistus, the bishop, replied, saying: 'If you believe with all your heart, my son, and you are baptized in the name of the Trinity, you will be cleansed.' Privatus, the soldier, replied: 'I believe that the Lord liberates and saves me in baptism, through your hand.' Then St Callistus baptized him, and thus he was cleansed of the wounds and sores by which he was infested. And he began to shout out, saying: 'The Lord Jesus Christ is the true and holy God, whom St Callistus is preaching: because empty and mute idols will be destroyed, but Christ is the eternal God.' Hearing this yet again, Alexander, moved with rage because Callistus had baptized the soldier Privatus, sent for Privatus and had him beaten and killed with lead-weighted whips, but Callistus he had thrown out of a window of the house, and with a stone tied to his neck, had him drowned in a well and stones heaped up on him.

9. After seventeen days his priest, named Asterius,³⁴ came with his clergy at night, and raised up the body of St Callistus the bishop, and buried him respectfully in the cemetery of Calepodius, on the Via Aurelia, on 14 October.³⁵ After six days Alexander arrested Asterius, the priest: he ordered him to be thrown from the bridge. His holy body was found in Ostia, and buried by some Christians in that city on 21 October,³⁶ with our Lord Jesus Christ reigning, Who lives and reigns as God forever and ever. Amen.

³⁴ St Asterius of Ostia also figures importantly in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.12–14) where, however, different information about the saint is given. On Asterius, see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 98–110 (on the saints of Ostia, including Asterius); BSS II, cols. 516–18 [M. V. Brandi]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 225–6.

³⁵ The burial of Callistus on 14 October is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, on the Via Aurelia, in the cemetery of Calepodius, Pope Callistus' (Appendix III, p. 657).

³⁶ The death of Asterius is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, but on 19 rather than 21 October: see Appendix III, below, p. 657.

XIII

St Eusebius the Priest

498 × 506; relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Eusebius (?), and to the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia) (?)

At the very end of the fifth century, following the death of Pope Anastasius II in 498, Symmachus was elected to the papacy. But although he had the support of the Ostrogothic king of Italy, Theoderic, a group of Roman senators, who had the backing of the eastern emperor Anastasius I (491–518), refused to accept Symmachus and preferred instead a local candidate named Laurence. The resulting schism, which was not settled until 506, was a violent affair, and involved the murder of a number of priests.¹ Adherents of Laurence carried on what can best be described as a campaign of pamphleteering, that is to say, they used the literary form of *passiones martyrum* as a vehicle with which to project their antagonisms back onto an earlier schism which had taken place during the reign of Constantius II (337–61), namely that between Pope Liberius (352–66) and the anti-pope Felix II (355–65).² In brief, Constantius, who was a fervent Arian, attempted to secure the deposition of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria and the foremost proponent of Nicene orthodoxy, and sought for this purpose the support of Pope Liberius.³ But Liberius refused to support the

¹ On the Laurentian schism, see the long entry for Pope Symmachus in the *Liber pontificalis* (ed. Mommsen, pp. 120–5; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 260–3; trans. Davis, pp. 45–8), as well as discussion by Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, II, pp. 88–114; Llewellyn, ‘The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism’; *idem*, ‘The Roman Clergy during the Laurentian Schism (498–506). A Preliminary Analysis’, *Ancient Society* 8 (1977), 345–75; and, more recently, E. Wirbelauer, *Zwei Päpste in Rom. Der Konflikt zwischen Laurentius und Symmachus (498–514): Studien und Texte* (Munich, 1993), esp. pp. 9–65, and Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 212–46.

² On this earlier schism, see Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, I, pp. 166–95. There is a clear account of this earlier schism, with English translations of all the relevant sources, in Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, pp. 534–95 (including letters of Liberius, and works of Hilary of Poitiers and Lucifer of Cagliari); also relevant to the war of pamphleteering are the text known as the *Gesta Xysti de purgatione* [CPL 1682], and the so-called ‘Laurentian Fragment’ of the *Liber pontificalis* (Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, pp. 103–6). See also Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 129–37.

³ See Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, pp. 115–18. Following his victory over the western usurper, Magnentius (350–3), Constantius attempted to impose ecclesiastical uniformity (which

emperor, and was accordingly exiled to Thrace (in 355).⁴ Constantius then appointed Liberius' archdeacon, one Felix, to the vacant see as Pope Felix II. But Felix was deeply unpopular, not least among supporters of Liberius, and after two years Liberius was recalled and reinstated (in 357),⁵ with the result that Felix was deposed; he ended his life in retreat on his country estate on the Via Portuense.⁶ In the campaign of pamphleteering which accompanied the Laurentian schism of 498–506, Liberius was refigured as Symmachus, with Felix II used to represent Laurence. Four of the texts translated in the present volume are products of this campaign: the present *passio*, that of Pope Felix II (XIV), that of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV), and the expanded version of the *passio* of Pope Sixtus II and companions (XVI). All date from the period 498–514.

The *passio* of Eusebius the priest is a very brief and very bitter account of the conflict between Liberius and Felix, by an obvious adherent of Laurence's party.⁷ Its narrative is as follows. When Liberius had been recalled from exile by Constantius (having evidently reached some accommodation with the emperor), Eusebius the priest began to denounce Liberius as a heretic, with the result that he was visited by Constantius and Liberius, and asked to explain himself; on being questioned, he accused both of them with sending Pope Felix into exile; Eusebius was accordingly locked up in a tiny cupboard, where he subsequently died after seven months on 14 August (c. 1). The priests Gregory and Orosius, two kinsmen of Eusebius, recovered his body and buried it next to that of Pope Sixtus in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia; for this reason, Constantius ordered that Gregory be buried alive, and that anyone else who would not take communion with Liberius was to be put to the sword; eventually Liberius died and was succeeded by Pope Damasus, who publicly condemned Liberius in a Roman synod, but the persecution (of orthodox Christians) only abated for a short time (c. 2).

Who was this Eusebius, who was so staunch a supporter of Pope Felix II? The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* records the death of a (presumed) martyr of this name against 14 August: 'Eusebius, founder of the *titulus*-church' (see Appendix III, p. 656). There is a church of S. Eusebio on the Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele which is regarded as one of the most famous *titulus*-churches in Rome. The Eusebius of this church was, therefore, presumably its

for him meant Arianism) on the western provinces; and it was the emperor's Arianism which was the source of many of the problems arising in the latter years of his principate (354–61).

⁴ As we know from Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xv. 7. 6–10; see discussion by Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, pp. 166–7.

⁵ For the dates, see Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, pp. 130–1.

⁶ See Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 237–68; Verrando, 'Liberio-Felice', pp. 91–125; and Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 129–37.

⁷ Listed BHL 2740; see discussion by Verrando, 'Liberio-Felice', pp. 108–10, and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 161–5.

founder.⁸ The present façade dates from the eighteenth century; but excavation beneath the medieval church revealed traces of a late antique basilica with three naves built over an earlier *domus*: a building sequence which is typical of many *titulus*-churches in Rome.⁹ But whether the founder of this church is identical with the martyr commemorated in the present *passio* is impossible to determine.

Nor can any significance be attached to the statement in the *passio* (c. 2) that Eusebius was buried next to the remains of Pope Sixtus 'in the catacombs of Callistus on the Via Appia'. This statement plainly derives from confusion with Pope Eusebius (whose brief pontificate occurred in 308) who, according to the *Liber pontificalis*, was 'buried <in the crypt> in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia on 2 October'.¹⁰ It is true that Pope Eusebius is buried alongside Pope Gaius in an arcosolium in the cemetery of Callistus: the crypt in question is located to the north of Area 1 and is designated O10 in the so-called 'region of Gaius and Eusebius'; it was originally intended for three tombs *a mensa* and was covered with white plaster and furnished with an inscription by Pope Damasus.¹¹ It was possibly this well-furnished crypt of Pope Eusebius which suggested to the author of the *passio* that Eusebius the priest was buried next to Pope Sixtus II (i.e. in the 'Papal Crypt'); but of the burial of a priest named Eusebius, with an inscription reading 'Eusebio homini Dei' (c. 2), there is no trace. It is entirely possible that 'Eusebius the priest' is a fiction created by the author of the present *passio*—a fictitious creation which has no connection with either the founder of the *titulus*-church or with the cemetery of Callistus. The choice of name for this fictitious priest was possibly inspired by the case of Eusebius of Vercelli. Eusebius was a Sardinian who became bishop of Vercelli in 345, but who had previously spent several years in Rome, where he was a friend of Pope Liberius (and possibly of Athanasius as well); like Liberius, he refused to support the attempts of Constantius II to have Athanasius deposed, whereupon he, like Liberius, was exiled by the Emperor in 355.¹² In one of his letters, Eusebius of Vercelli mentions that, in exile, he had been kept in custody in a very restricted space.¹³ This detail may have suggested to the

⁸ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 58–61; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 251; Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 504, 600–1 and 654 (who suggests that it is not to be dated before 440); and G. De Spirito, 'S. Eusebius, titulus', *LTUR* II, pp. 239–40.

⁹ See Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 209–15, and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 214–15.

¹⁰ Ed. Mommsen, p. 45; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 167; trans. Davis, p. 14.

¹¹ See L. Spera, 'Cal(l)isti Coemeterium (Via Appia)', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 32–44, esp. p. 41 with figs. 34 (map showing the location of the 'Region of Gaius and Eusebius'), 45, and 49 (reconstruction of the crypt of Pope Eusebius), as well as Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 217–19, with fig. 71; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 199–200; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 93–102; and Reekmans, 'Les tombeaux des papes Gaius et Eusèbe'.

¹² See *EEC* I, p. 302, and Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, pp. 155–8.

¹³ *Ep.* ii. 6. 2: 'iterum rapiunt et arctiori custodia . . . recludunt' (*CCSL* IX, p. 107).

author of the present *passio* the similar custody suffered by Eusebius the priest, and may even have been the source of the name.¹⁴

Text. The present *passio* enjoyed modest medieval circulation: *BHLms* lists fifty-nine witnesses, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further twenty-two.¹⁵ It has been printed on two occasions: by Mombricitus (I, p. 459), and by the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Augusti III* [1737], pp. 166–7, where in notes 5–7 the text is given as far as *persequente Constantio Christianos una cum Liberio* (end of c. 2); the final sentence ('When Liberius died . . . forever and ever') was supplied from a manuscript in Liège in *AB* 5 (1886), 327–8. The division into chapters is my own.

1. At the time when Liberius¹⁶ had been recalled from exile by the heretical emperor Constantius Augustus¹⁷—heretical in respect of the dogma that he would not rebaptize the people but chose to contaminate them with the one communion—Eusebius the priest began to declare at Rome that Liberius was a heretic and was a friend of Constantius. And so when many people in their holy and catholic confession were avoiding communion with Liberius as a result of the teaching of Eusebius, churches were occupied by the party of Liberius; Felix was expelled from the pontificate;¹⁸ Liberius was chosen in his place; the priest Eusebius was detained, because in the house which he had himself constructed he was assembling a crowd and was admonishing them.¹⁹ Then the emperor Constantius went with Liberius to Eusebius, saying: 'Are

¹⁴ Yet another possible source for the name is a detail preserved in the *Gesta Liberii*, c. 2, that Constantius II had undergone a second baptism at the hands of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia (*PL* VIII, col. 1389). This Eusebius, however, was reviled as a leader of heretics; see D. M. Gwynn, *The Eusebians. The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the 'Arian Controversy'* (Oxford, 2006), esp. pp. 60–6, 116–20, and 211–19.

¹⁵ 'Hagiographie', p. 162, n. 347.

¹⁶ Liberius was pope from 352 to 366: see *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 77–9; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 207–10; trans. Davis, pp. 29–30; and see discussion in *DACL* IX/1, cols. 497–530 [H. Leclercq] and *EP* I, pp. 341–8 [M. Simonetti].

¹⁷ Constantius II was Augustus 337–61. The principal source for his reign is Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xiv–xxi; unfortunately, the first thirteen books of Ammianus' work, some of which will have treated the early years of the reign, have been lost. The crucial point of relevance for the present *passio* is that Constantius II was a resolute Arian who was repudiated by orthodox Christians such as Hilary of Poitiers and Lucifer of Cagliari; see the texts by Hilary of Poitiers and Lucifer of Cagliari, translated by R. Flower, *Imperial Invektives against Constantius II*, TTH 67 (Liverpool, 2016), pp. 115–40 [Hilary] and 141–86 [Lucifer], with discussion of these texts at pp. 2–38; on the controversy in general, see the valuable discussion by M. Humphries, 'In nomine patris: Constantine the Great and Constantius in Christological Polemic', *History* 46 (1997), 448–64.

¹⁸ Felix II, who was Liberius' archdeacon, had been appointed by Constantius II to the vacant pontificate following the exile of Liberius in 355, but was himself set aside when Liberius was recalled from exile in 357. See *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 80–1; Duchesne, I, pp. 207–15; trans. Davis, p. 30, and discussion by Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, I, pp. 187–9, and in *EP* I, pp. 348–9 [M. Simonetti].

¹⁹ The author is presumably intending to allude here to the *titulus*-church of Eusebius (see n. 7), without making a specific statement to that effect. It is of course an absurd suggestion that the emperor, in the company of Liberius, would have made a house call at this address.

you the only Christian in Rome?’ Eusebius the priest replied: ‘I trust in the Lord that Christ will find us to be faithful, just as we were baptized through the blessings which were received from the holy Julius.’²⁰ Liberius said: ‘Whose position am I occupying? Was not Julius my predecessor?’ Eusebius, the priest, said: ‘If only you were to persevere in the faith which you were earlier seen to possess during the persecution!’ Liberius said, in the presence of the Augustus: ‘Do you regard me as that obstinate?’ Eusebius said: ‘The matter itself reveals and declares you.’ The emperor Constantius said: ‘And what is the distinction between faith and faith?’ Eusebius, the priest, replied: ‘As great as the faith which we sinners were maintaining, so great is the insanity of the devil and the jealousy of your superstition, that you sent the catholic pope Felix, whom you did not (sufficiently) revere—a bishop declared by everyone to be pure, and one who was invoking Jesus Christ—into exile by way of damning him; who nevertheless occupies himself with prayer on his little estate; and indeed you have by your command ordered death and destruction to be visited on Christians, the clergy, priests and deacons most of all.’²¹ Then in his rage Constantius, at the request of Liberius, confined Eusebius to a cupboard in his house, which was only four feet across. And being kept there for many days, he persevered constantly in prayer, and yet after seven months he passed away on 14 August.²²

2. Gregory and Orosius the priests, as well as his kinsmen, recovered the body of Eusebius the priest, and buried him next to the remains of the blessed martyr and bishop, Sixtus, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.²³ There they composed his epitaph and set it up to commemorate him: ‘To Eusebius, a man of God’.²⁴ At that same time Constantius heard that the priests Gregory and Orosius had recovered the body of Eusebius the priest; and he ordered that Gregory be buried alive in the same crypt. Then Orosius the priest secretly recovered the holy Gregory, half-alive—at night, because of the emperor Constantius; and when Gregory had given up the ghost, he [Orosius] buried him next to the body of St Eusebius the priest. These events were recorded in writing by Orosius the priest. From that day forth, in accordance with the orders of Constantius, if anyone was found in the churches (of Rome) who would not confess and take communion in the manner of Liberius, he would be punished by the sword without trial. People were being put to the sword in streets and alleys, and in churches, and even in

²⁰ Julius was pope 337–52; see *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 75–6; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 206–6; trans. Davis, pp. 28–9; and see discussion in *EP* I, pp. 334–40 [M. Simonetti].

²¹ The exile and martyrdom of Pope Felix II form the subject of the following *passio* (XIV).

²² This is the date given for the death of Eusebius in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 656).

²³ The Eusebius who was buried in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia was Pope Eusebius (308), not Eusebius the priest; see n. 10.

²⁴ No such inscription has ever been found.

the baths, as Constantius, together with Liberius, persecuted the Christians.²⁵ When Liberius died, Damasus was elevated to the papacy; he publicly condemned Liberius in a synod of twenty-eight bishops and twenty-five priests,²⁶ and so persecution ceased for no great length of time, through the gift of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

²⁵ Cf. the description in Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res gestae* xxvii. 3) of the 137 persons killed during the disputed papal election of 366.

²⁶ There is no record of such a synod being held under Pope Damasus (but it must be said that the record of synods held under this pope is far from complete: see C. J. Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, II. AD 326 to AD 429, trans. H. N. Oxenham (Edinburgh, 1876), pp. 287–9). Damasus did convene a synod at Rome soon after his election, in which Ursicinus and Valens were condemned as Arians; this synod was attended by ninety ‘fathers’ (*patres*): see J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, 31 vols. (Florence, 1759–98), III, cols. 447–8. In a second synod convened by Damasus, probably in 369, Ursicinus and Auxentius, bishop of Milan, were condemned as Arians (Mansi, *ibid.*, cols. 455–62). But neither of these synods makes mention of a condemnation of Liberius, and neither was said to have been attended by twenty-eight bishops and twenty-five priests.

XIV

Pope Felix II

498 × 506; relevant to the cemetery and basilica *ad duos Felices* (Via Aurelia)

The present *passio* of Pope Felix II,¹ like the *passio* of Eusebius the priest (XIII) on which it draws, was composed at the time of the Laurentian schism (498–506) by an adherent of the party of Laurence, who used the earlier schism between Liberius and Felix II as a vehicle to reconfigure that between Symmachus and Laurence. The narrative of this brief *passio* is as follows. In the days of the emperors Constantine and Constantius II, Liberius was the pope of Rome; he was exiled because he did not wish to conform to (the emperor's) Arian heresy, and in his place Felix the priest was ordained; Felix convened a synod at which he condemned two Roman priests, Ursacius and Valens, who were sympathetic to Arian doctrine, and condemned the emperor, Constantius, on the same grounds, for which he was expelled from the pontificate (c. 1). Shortly afterwards, Ursacius and Valens asked the emperor to recall Liberius from exile; on his return from exile, Liberius lived first with Constantia, the sister of Constantius, at her imperial estate next to the cemetery of St Agnes, and in due course Liberius was recalled from here to Rome (c. 2). Then Constantius summoned a synod with the heretics Ursacius and Valens, and condemned Felix, who was at that time living on his estate on the Via Portuense; he was taken from there to the town of Cori, and decapitated; his body was buried in the basilica which he had constructed at the second mile of the Via Aurelia on 18 November, and his feast day is celebrated on 29 July (c. 3).

The account of the exile and recall of Pope Liberius, and of the appointment and then the dismissal of Pope Felix II, is consonant with that given in the *passio* of Eusebius the priest (no. XIII; the two *passiones* are conceivably the work of one author), as well as in other historical sources of the fourth century; it was subsequently drawn on by the compiler of the first redaction of the *Liber*

¹ Listed *BHL* 2857; discussed by Verrando, 'Liberio–Felice', and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 165–70.

pontificalis.² But whereas the historical situation regarding Liberius and Felix II is relatively well known,³ the evidence which it provides pertaining to the cult of the martyr is far from clear. In the first place, there is confusion in the surviving sources regarding the site of his burial at the second mile of the Via Aurelia;⁴ then there is confusion about whether his small estate (*praediolum*) on the Via Portuense was also the site of a church in his memory.⁵ Finally, it is wholly unclear why, if he was living in retirement on his estate on the Via Portuense, he was taken all the way to Cori, nearly thirty miles south of Rome, to be executed.⁶ It would appear that the author was so animated by his partisanship for Laurence that he paid little attention to details of topography.

² On the debt of the *Liber pontificalis* to the present *passio*, rather than *vice versa*, see J. P. Kirsch, 'Die Grabstätte der *Felices duo pontifices*'; Verrando, 'Liberio-Felice', pp. 117–18; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 169; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 265–71.

³ See the clear account by Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 129–37, as well as the earlier account by Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, pp. 534–95, with translations of all the relevant sources.

⁴ The seventh-century 'Malmesbury Itinerary' states that in a 'third (basilica)' on the Via Aurelia lie 'the two saints named Felix', and a similar notice is found in the *Notitia ecclesiarum*: 'Then you will proceed on the same road to the two holy popes and martyrs, (both named) Felix' (see Appendix IV (c) [§14] and (a) [§12] respectively, below, pp. 666, 662). These notices have caused confusion and disagreement among scholars, because there is no sound evidence that any pope named Felix, other than Felix II of the present *passio*, was ever martyred: for detailed accounts of the arguments, see Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 76–81; G. N. Verrando, 'Felices duo, basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 240–3, with fig. 232, and esp. Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 259–76 ('Il santuario ad duos Felices'). The conclusion drawn by Verrando and Amore is that the memorial of Pope Felix II was at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, but that no other pope named Felix was buried there.

⁵ On the possible existence of a memorial to Pope Felix II on the Via Portuense, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 86–7; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, p. 151; Verrando, 'Il santuario di S. Felice', pp. 331–66; and *idem*, 'S. Felices ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 243–5. The problem is that the name Felix is exceedingly common, and it is impossible to be certain that Pope Felix II is in question here.

⁶ The name of the place where Felix is said to have been executed is problematical: the text of Mombricitus reads *in ciuitatem Corauam*; Verrando prints the meaningless *in ciuitatem Coronam* (p. 123). There is no attested Italian town named *Corona*; but the form *Coraua* in Mombricitus is arguably a corruption of *Corana* (with *n* misread as *u*), the ethnic adjectival form of the name *Cora*, modern Cori, which is a fortified hill town lying some five miles to the east of the Via Appia, at a point twenty-eight miles or so south of Rome; for the location, see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 43 (D3), and esp. P. Brandizzi Vittucci, *Cora. Formae Italiae: Regio I*, 5 (Rome, 1968), who at pp. 31–2 provides a list of all classical sources (including Livy and Pliny the Elder) in which *Cora* is mentioned. But if the identification of the *ciuitas Corana* is clear, it is nevertheless not clear why Constantius' executioners should have bothered to take Felix all the way from his estate on the Via Portuense to Cori, far to the south of Rome; possibly the author had no notion of where *Cora* was. Given these distances, it is not surprising that it took Felix's followers over a week to remove the body from the site of execution (10 November) and bury it on the Via Aurelia, on 18 November. It is also possible that there was a tiny hamlet called Cora in the near vicinity of Felix's estate on the Via Portuense, which has disappeared and can no longer be identified. Such a locality would be a more suitable site for the execution of Felix.

Text. The text of this brief *passio* enjoyed fairly wide circulation: *BHLms* lists some seventy-five manuscripts, to which Lanéry was able to add a further thirty.⁷ But few of these manuscripts have ever been collated, and the text is primarily available in the edition of Mombritius (I, pp. 550–1). More recently Verrando consulted a number of manuscripts and produced a working text based on a single ninth-century manuscript (Paris, BNF, lat. 5299 (?Saint-Germain in Paris, s. ix^{2/4})), with reported readings (all worthless) from some thirty-six other manuscripts in his apparatus criticus.⁸ But Verrando simply reproduced the orthography and punctuation of the Paris manuscript, and made no attempt to edit the text when what is transmitted by the Paris manuscript is palpable nonsense; a critical edition is therefore a great desideratum. The chapter divisions are my own.

1. Liberius was the pope of Rome from the time of Constantine the Great up to that of Constantius;⁹ he was exiled by Constantius in the third <year of his pontificate>¹⁰ because he did not wish to conform to the Arian heresy; and he spent three years in exile.¹¹ And at that point the bishops, together with the entire Roman clergy, ordained in his place Felix the priest, a venerable man, as bishop of the city. And this same Felix convened a synod, and he discovered two Roman priests, named Ursacius and Valens,¹² who were in sympathy with the Arian Constantius Augustus; and he condemned them in council in the presence of the forty-eight bishops who were present. He [Felix] declared Constantius, the son of Constantine, to be a heretic, and to have been rebaptized a second time by Eusebius of Nicomedia, in the Villa Aquilo near Nicomedia.¹³ And as a result of this declaration, the holy Felix was expelled from the pontificate by Constantius Augustus, the son of Constantine Augustus. He built a basilica on the Via Aurelia when he was still a priest, and (while

⁷ 'Hagiographie', p. 167, n. 357.

⁸ 'Liberio-Felice', pp. 122–4.

⁹ Liberius was pope from 352 until 366; the emperor Constantine died in 337, and his son and successor, Constantius II, in 361; see *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 77–9; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 207–10; trans. Davis, pp. 29–30; and see discussion in *DACL* IX/1, cols. 497–530 [H. Leclercq] and *EP* I, pp. 348–9 [M. Simonetti].

¹⁰ The text of Mombritius is corrupt here ('qui tertio exilio deportatus est a Constantio', which should mean 'was sent into exile a third time by Constantius'); Verrando prints the equally meaningless 'qui tertio hic exilio deportatus est a Constantio' (p. 122). I supply the words *anno pontificatus eius after tertio*; Liberius was exiled in 355, the third year after he became pope in 352.

¹¹ In fact Liberius spent only two years in exile (355–7); see Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, pp. 130–1. The reason Liberius was exiled by Constantius is not that he would not conform to the emperor's Arian heresy, but because he would not agree to the emperor's wish to depose Bishop Athanasius, as we learn from Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xv. 7. 10.

¹² The names are (intentionally?) reminiscent of two Balkan bishops: Ursacius of *Singidunum* (modern Belgrade) and Valens of *Mursa* (modern Osijek in Croatia), who were instrumental in implementing Constantius II's ecclesiastical policies in the West, whence they attracted the opposition of Hilary of Poitiers (see *CPL* 450 and 455).

¹³ This statement concerning the rebaptism of Constantius is taken from c. 2 of the so-called *Gesta Liberii* [*CPL* 1681; *BHL* 4907], ed. *PL* VIII, cols. 1388–93, at 1389.

serving) in that same basilica, he purchased a nearby estate which he donated to the basilica he had built.¹⁴

2. Now after a few days Ursacius and Valens the priests, driven by zeal, asked Constantius the Augustus to recall Pope Liberius from exile, so that he could participate in the one catholic communion, leaving aside the rebaptism. Then with imperial authority enacted through the agent Catulinus, as well as through Ursacius and Valens, they came to Liberius, the pope of Rome. Liberius agreed to the orders of the Augustus, that they should agree on the one form of communion. Then they recalled Liberius from exile; following his return the pope lived with Constantia¹⁵ Augusta, the sister of Constantius, adjacent to the cemetery of St Agnes the Martyr,¹⁶ such that, as if through her intervention, Liberius could make his return to the city of Rome. At that time Constantia Augusta, who was a faithful adherent of the Lord Jesus Christ, did not wish to petition her brother Constantius Augustus, because she was aware of his opinion. At that same time Constantius Augustus, together with Ursacius and Valens, called up some others who were of the Arian faith, and sent agents and recalled Pope Liberius from the cemetery of St Agnes the Martyr, and Liberius then entered Rome.

3. In that very hour Constantius the Augustus summoned a synod with the heretics, including Ursacius and Valens, and he expelled St Felix, the bishop of the city, from his bishopric—a man who was catholic and God-fearing and a just man—and recalled Liberius in his place. From that day forth there was a great persecution of the clergy, to the point that priests and clerics were being killed and crowned with martyrdom within the church. The holy and blessed Pope Felix was dismissed at that time from his bishopric, and he lived on his little estate on the Via Portuense;¹⁷ and he was removed from there and taken to the town of Cori, and there he was executed by decapitation, and crowned with martyrdom on 10 November.¹⁸ Thereupon his body was taken and buried by priests and clerics in the basilica which he had constructed at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, on 18 November. His feast day is celebrated up to the present day on 29 July, in praise and glory of the name of God, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever.¹⁹

¹⁴ See n. 4.

¹⁵ The sister of Constantius was named Constantina, not Constantia (the mistaken form presumably derives from similarity to her brother's name). On Constantina, see no. XVII (p. 352, and n. 9).

¹⁶ The church of St Agnes and the mausoleum of Constantina were both built on an imperial estate on the Via Nomentana; see no. XVII (p. 353, and n. 12).

¹⁷ See n. 5.

¹⁸ See n. 6.

¹⁹ Pope Felix II is not commemorated on any of these dates (10 and 18 November, 29 July) in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: see the edition of de Rossi and Duchesne in *Acta SS., Nouembris* II/1, where against 29 July the death of a martyr named Felix *in Africa* is recorded, who cannot be identical with Pope Felix II (p. 97), and where against neither 10 nor 18 November is there any mention of anyone named Felix (pp. 141 and 144).

XV

SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis

498 × 514; relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Pudentiana; to the *titulus*-church of St Praxedis; and to the cemetery of Priscilla (Via Salaria Nuova)

The present *passio* of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis concerns two wealthy virgins who, during the principate of Antoninus Pius (138–61), established *titulus*-churches in Rome in collaboration with Pope Pius (c.145).¹ Although both Pudentiana and Praxedis died young, neither of them died as a martyr. The *passio* is not, therefore, principally concerned with martyrdom as such, but with the legitimate process of establishment of *titulus*-churches, with papal support, in Rome. This concern reveals the present *passio* as another pamphlet in the campaign against Pope Symmachus in favour of the antipope Laurence, who was in fact *archipresbyter* of the *titulus*-church of St Praxedis.²

The *passio* is framed as two letters: one, from a priest named Pastor to his brother, Timothy, also a priest, which explains the family relationships, character, and death of Pudentiana (cc. 1–6); the second is Timothy's reply to Pastor (c. 7). The narrative is as follows. Pastor's letter begins by reminding Timothy that their brother Pudens had two daughters, Praxedis and Pudentiana, whom he brought up as devout Christians after the death of his wife; with the support of Pope Pius, he established a *titulus*-church on the *Vicus Patricius* following the death of Pudens (c. 1). The *titulus*-church was established in the name of Pastor; Praxedis and Pudentiana arranged to have a baptismal font placed in this church, at which ninety-six persons were baptized on Easter Day (c. 2). These events were reported to the emperor, Antoninus Pius, who ordered that all these Christians were to live within their own dwellings and not to come into contact with the populace at large (c. 3). At the age of sixteen

¹ Listed CPL 2224, and BHL 6988 (St Pudentiana) and 6989 (St Praxedis); for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 127–30; BSS X, cols. 1062–72 [B. Vanmaele]; Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, pp. 79–96; Llewellyn, 'The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism', pp. 417–27; Guidobaldi, 'Osservazioni sugli edifici romani'; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 170–7; Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 14–19; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 64–5.

² See Llewellyn, 'The Roman Church during the Laurentian Schism', esp. pp. 418–21, and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 174–6. On the issue of ownership of *titulus*-churches during the Laurentian Schism, see Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 225–35.

Pudentiana died, and was buried next to her father Pudens in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria (c. 4). Praxedis was inconsolable, but attempts to console her were made by Bishop Pius and Novatus, the brother of Timothy and Pastor, but Novatus soon fell ill (c. 5). He bequeathed his entire estate to Pastor and Praxedis, and then died (c. 6). Timothy then wrote to Pastor and Praxedis to say that he was happy with the arrangements which had been made regarding the estate of Novatus, and this letter was passed to Pope Pius, who approved its content (c. 7). Praxedis then asked Pope Pius to consecrate the baths of Novatus, located in the *Vicus Patricius*, as a church, in the name of St Pudentiana; he also dedicated another church, in the *Vicus Lateranus*, in the name of St Praxedis; Praxedis herself, after burying many Christians during the persecution, died and was buried by Pastor in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria (c. 8). It will be seen that the principal concern of this *passio* is with the establishment of the two *titulus*-churches: one in the name of Pudentiana (corresponding to present-day S. Pudenziana), the other in that of Praxedis (modern S. Prassede).

S. *Pudenziana*. The late antique *titulus*-church of St Pudentiana is essentially preserved (with some later remodelling) as the church of S. Pudenziana, on the Via Urbana on the Esquiline. From three inscriptions on brick-stamps found beneath the present church, during excavations conducted by Antonio Petrigani in the 1930s,³ it has been established that in the early second century AD the property was a workshop of some sort, belonging to one Q. Servilius Pudens.⁴ By the later fourth century, however, it had become a church: an inscription dating from the 380s, hence during the last years of the pontificate of Damasus (366–84), names three priests (Ilicius, Maximus, and Leopardus) belonging to the clergy of the *titulus*-church, and a Christian basilica was constructed on the site over a number of years by Damasus' successors, Popes Siricius (384–99) and Innocent I (402–17).⁵ The Christian

³ See Petrigani, *La basilica di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 21–69, with pls. II–VI, and Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 116–26 (on Petrigani's excavations).

⁴ For the brick-stamps (which carry the dates AD 128, 129, and 134), see Petrigani, *ibid.* p. 25. The Pudens who owned the factory was evidently a member of the upper classes, for a generation later, in 166, a man of this same name was consul. In spite of the pagan associations of the site, Pudens was inevitably identified with the Christian of that name who is addressed in a letter of St Paul (II Tim. 4: 21); see discussion by Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, p. 95, and Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 282–3, with pls. XVIII–XXI.

⁵ On the Christian basilica, see Petrigani, *La basilica di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 1–20 (the historical sources for the basilica), and 35–44; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 424–5; *DACL* XIV/2, cols. 1967–73 [H. Leclercq]; Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, pp. 21–36; Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 277–302; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 137–42; *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 145–51; A. Milella, 'S. Pudentiana, titulus', *LTUR* IV, pp. 166–8; and esp. the comprehensive study by Claudia Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, esp. pp. 99–130, with figs. 99–157 (history of excavations), 159–261, with figs. 158–362 (description of the basilica), 279–87 (pre-existing earlier buildings, first to third century AD), and 291–302, with pls. XXII–XXIII (the adaptation of the basilica for Christian use).

basilica was adapted from an earlier secular basilica built in the mid-second century; it would appear that the secular basilica was part of some baths (*thermae*), which had in turn been adapted from a Roman *domus* datable (from the above-mentioned brick-stamps) to AD 128–9.⁶ Although doubts have been expressed about the nature of the bath-complex,⁷ the existence of the secular basilica is not in doubt. As Krautheimer observed, S. Pudenziana ‘is the only instance surviving in Rome of the adoption by a Christian congregation of a Roman secular basilica’.⁸ The first phase of the conversion to a Christian basilica was done under Popes Siricius and Innocent I. The three-aisled basilica was provided with a façade facing the street (the *Vicus Patricius*, now the Via Urbana);⁹ more strikingly, the end wall of the secular basilica was rebuilt as a curved apse, and provided with a huge mosaic depicting Christ teaching his disciples, surrounded by two female figures and symbols of the evangelists.¹⁰ This mosaic is the oldest surviving Christian apse mosaic.

In the mosaic, Christ holds a placard bearing the legend, ‘DOMINVS CONSERVATOR ECCLESIAE PVDENTIANAE’. The adjectival form *pudentian-us, -a, -um* derives from the name Pudens, thought to have been the original owner of the property. In any case, a century after the basilica was remodelled as a Christian church in the late fourth century, the resulting church was known in records as the *titulus Pudentis*.¹¹ What is important to stress is that the name ‘Pudentiana’ did not originally pertain to the devout virgin after

⁶ See Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 283 and 288–93, and Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 282–3.

⁷ Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 138, points out that no hypocausts were found during excavation (hypocausts being the indispensable element of a bath complex), and that the basins might instead have been *nymphaea*, fountain installations, in an open courtyard.

⁸ *CBCR* III, p. 301.

⁹ See S. Serra, ‘Vicus Patricius’, *LTUR* V, p. 183, and G. De Spirito, ‘Vicus Patricius (fonti medievali)’, *LTUR* V, p. 183; in fact, the present church lies well below street level and is reached by two flights of stairs; the late antique *Vicus Patricius* lies some 11.5 metres beneath the present Via Urbana.

¹⁰ For the mosaic, see Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken*, II, pp. 1066–8, and III, pls. 42–6 (there is a reduced English version of Wilpert’s great work, with colour plates: see *Roman Mosaics: Over 60 Full-Colour Images from the 4th through the 13th Centuries* (Mineola, NY, 2007), pls. 5–6), and, more conveniently, Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, figs. 66–8, and *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, figs. 82–4.

¹¹ The *titulus Pudentis* was represented by two priests named Asterius and Justinus at the Roman synod of 499 (*MGH*, *AA* XII, p. 411), and again by a priest named Bassus in the synod held under Pope Gregory the Great in 595 (*MGH*, *Epist.* I, p. 366). See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 61–7, and C. Angelelli, ‘*Titulus Pudentis*’. The church may also have been known as the *titulus Pastoris*, as a result of a confusing statement in c. 1 of the present *passio* (Pastor speaking): ‘he [Pudens] established a *titulus*-church in my name (*titulum nomini nostro constituit*) in the city of Rome’. See Vanmaele, *L’église Pudentielle*, pp. 43–4, as well as M. Cecchelli, ‘Il sacello di S. Pietro e l’oratorio di S. Pastore in S. Pudenziana: una messa a punto’, *Romanobarbarica* 9 (1987), 47–64; *eadem*, ‘S. Pastor, titulus’, *LTUR* IV, p. 62; and esp. Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 19–24.

whom the church is named: the devout virgin is a fiction created by the author of the present *passio*.¹²

S. *Prassede*. The present church of S. Prassede,¹³ which lies on the Esquiline on the Via di S. Martino (ancient *Clivus Suburbanus*) some 90 metres to the south of the great basilica of S. Maria Maggiore, is essentially the Carolingian church which was built by Pope Paschal I between 817 and 824 on the model of Old St Peter's.¹⁴ However, documentary evidence makes it clear that the Carolingian basilica replaced a *titulus*-church in the name of Praxedis, which was in existence by the end of the fifth century,¹⁵ and which by the end of the sixth century had become the *titulus sanctae Praxedis*, by the common process by which an unknown founder was understood to be a saint and martyr. The precise location of the *titulus*-church is not certainly known. Earlier scholars identified the left-hand arcade of the atrium as a remnant of the nave arcade of the earlier church,¹⁶ but this identification is now generally rejected. Krautheimer, however, suggested that a half dome found near the corner of the atrium may belong to the late antique *titulus*. The essential point is that by the end of the fifth century there was a *titulus*-church in the name of Praxedis at, or in the near vicinity of, the present Carolingian basilica of S. Prassede.

Text. As Cécile Lanéry has shown, during manuscript transmission the present *passio* was often divided into two, thereby yielding a *passio* of St Pudentiana and one of St Praxedis; and this fact makes it very difficult to estimate the total number of surviving manuscripts, and to separate references to the individual parts from references to the whole. It is clear, nevertheless, that the *passio* enjoyed modest circulation in comparison with some of the other Roman *passiones*: *BHLms* lists 109 manuscripts for the whole and the parts, and to this number Lanéry has added a further thirty-four.¹⁷ The present text is translated from the edition in *Acta SS*, *Maii* IV [1685],

¹² See Amore, 'Note agiografiche sul calendario perpetuo', pp. 30–3; Frutaz, 'Titolo di Pudente'; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 64, n. 85: 'Per Pudenziana poi non si tratta neppure di una persona, ma di un patronimico, di un attributo ritenuto come persona.'

¹³ On S. Prassede, see *DACL* XIV/2, cols. 1691–1700 [H. Leclercq]; B. M. Apollonj Ghetti, *Santa Prassede* (Rome, 1961); Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 232–59 with pls. XI–XII; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 197–8; *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 212–14; M. Caperna, 'Osservazioni sull'architettura della basilica'; and S. Serra, 'S. Praxedes, titulus', *LTUR* IV, pp. 161–2.

¹⁴ Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 11–12; and see Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I*, pp. 83–6 and 228–44.

¹⁵ A fragmentary inscription found in the cemetery of Hippolytus (Via Tiburtina) dated 489 mentions a priest named Argyrius of the *titulus Praxedis*: 'ARGYRIOS PRAESB. TIT. [P]RAXS [EDIS]' (*ICUR* VII, no. 19991). An *archipresbyter* named Caelius Laurentius, together with a priest named Petrus, were signatories to the Roman synod of 499 as representatives of the *titulus Praxidae* (*MGH*, AA XII, pp. 410, 414). See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 61–7.

¹⁶ Apollonj Ghetti, *Santa Prassede*, p. 11 (see n. 13).

¹⁷ 'Hagiographie', p. 172, n. 372. Note that Mombritius prints the two parts separately (presumably because that is the way they were preserved in the late medieval legendary which he was reproducing): St Praxedis at II, pp. 353–4, and St Potentiana [*sic* for Pudentiana] at II, pp. 390–1.

pp. 299–300 (whence it is repr. by Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, pp. 161–4, and by Angelelli, *La basilica titolare di S. Pudenziana*, pp. 337–9); the chapter-numbering is that of the Bollandists.

1. Pastor the priest sends best wishes to Timothy the priest. It was a principal concern of Pudens, our friend and brother, to be a worshipper of the apostles and a comforter of pilgrims. After the death of his wife, Savinilla, and of his parents, that is Punicus his father and Priscilla his mother,¹⁸ who had arranged for his marriage to his wife, he scorned all his worldly wealth and devoted himself to the study of all the Lord's teachings. His deceased wife had left him with two daughters—Praxedis and Pudentiana; Pudens brought them up in thoroughly chaste ways and in great love of Christianity, and instructed them in every aspect of divine learning. He himself had been taught by the blessed Pius,¹⁹ who also taught you; seeking after the death of his wife to consecrate his house as a church, he brought (his plans) to fulfilment with the help of us sinners; whence he established a *titulus*-church in my name in the city of Rome,²⁰ in the place which is called the *Vicus Patricius*.²¹ Concerning this Pudens I (wish to) inform you that he passed to the Lord of all things, and left his aforementioned two daughters, sustained by their chastity and instructed in every aspect of divine learning.

2. Immediately these blessed virgins sold all their property and distributed it among the poor; and, remaining pure without deceit in the love of Christ, they rejoice in every respect in the flower of virginity, persevering in vigils, fasts and prayers. In that same place, where their father Pudens of blessed memory had dedicated a *titulus*-church in my name, this (following) plan was conceived between me and the servants of Christ Praxedis and Pudentiana, that we should seek to establish a baptismal font in that same *titulus*-church on Easter Day—because their wishes were driven by extreme devotion to the faith—on

¹⁸ The name *Priscilla* is meant to raise the possibility—though the author does not spell it out—that the mother of Pudens was the Priscilla who was the founder of the cemetery (catacombs) of Priscilla, in which many of the persons mentioned in this text are said to have been buried: see cc. 4 (St Pudentiana and her father Pudens), and 8 (the unnamed martyrs of 26 May, and St Praxedis).

¹⁹ As we learn subsequently (c. 2), this Pius was the bishop (pope) of Rome; in the *Liber pontificalis* he is listed as the eleventh pope (LP, ed. Mommsen, p. 14; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 132; trans. Davis, p. 5, who assigns his pontificate approximately to the years between 145 and 160). Note that a sentence of the LP entry for Pius, concerning SS. Praxedis and Pudentiana (c. 4), was later interpolated from the present *passio*, probably during the eleventh century.

²⁰ The transmitted text here reads *titulum nomini nostro constituit* (Acta SS., Maii IV, p. 299)—by which the author intends us to understand that the *titulus*, though founded by Pudens, originally bore the name of Pastor. The question of Pastor's role in the foundation is complex (see above). The church is sometimes referred to in medieval sources as the *titulus Pastoris* (Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, pp. 43–4), but these references presumably derive from the present *passio*; in the earliest records (e.g. of the Roman synod of 499), however, it is the *titulus Pudentis*. See n. 11.

²¹ On the *Vicus Patricius* (the present-day Via Urbana), see n. 8.

behalf of their entire family, which was (still) pagan. We consulted with Pius, the holy bishop of the apostolic see, about this plan; it found favour with him to such a great extent that he eagerly insisted that there should be a baptistery, just as we had planned. He himself designed and constructed the font with his own hands. And when everything had been completed through God's assistance, the servants of Christ [Pudentiana and Praxedis] summoned all their household, both from the city itself and from outlying estates,²² and, devoting special attention to those whom they found to be Christians, they granted freeborn status; those whom they found to be pagans, they enticed to belief in the holy law of Christ. Whereupon, after Pope Pius had taken counsel, the manumissions were performed according to ancient practice. On the holy day of Easter ninety-six people of either sex were baptized; and when all this had been completed, there was a (great) congregation in that same *titulus*-church, such that the sound of hymns did not cease by day or night, and a multitude of pagans hastened to (accept) the faith, and were baptized in great rejoicing.

3. A report was sent to the emperor Antoninus (Pius)²³ concerning these events. Antoninus, this most merciful Augustus, ordered on his authority that whosoever worshipped Christ should know that they ought to live by themselves in their own dwellings; and that they should not come into contact with the remaining populace through social intercourse, nor go shopping in public, nor frequent the public baths, but should only remain in their own homes. Since this order was kept by all Christians, for many days I looked after our daughters [Pudentiana and Praxedis], (both of them) dedicated to God and confirmed with sound attestation in their virginity, devoting themselves to prayers, vigils, and fasts and persisting by day and night in praise of Christ in their own home, the aforementioned *titulus*-church, together with the people of God who had come to believe through them; they had a sufficient supply of necessary provisions. And the blessed Pope Pius happily visited us frequently, and celebrated mass to the Lord on our behalf.

4. When she had reached the age of sixteen, the Lord's virgin Pudentiana passed to the Lord. I, together with her sister, wrapped up her body with spices, and kept it secretly hidden in the aforementioned *titulus*-church. After twenty-eight days, we took the body at night and buried it next to her father Pudens in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria,²⁴ on 19 May.

²² The 'family' or 'household' (*familiam suam*) would include freeborn members as well as slaves.

²³ For the principate of Antoninus Pius (138–61), see *SHA*, 'Antoninus Pius', which is probably based on the (lost) *Vitae Caesarum* of Marius Maximus, and is thought to be largely trustworthy; see also Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 15 (trans. Bird, pp. 17–18). Antoninus Pius is not known to history as a persecutor of Christians, and the persecution which is described here (c. 8) is pure invention.

²⁴ On the catacombs of Priscilla, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 461–558; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 254–60; Tolotti, *Il cimitero di Priscilla*, esp. pp. 237–57, with pl. III ('La

5. After her death, Praxedis, the virgin of Christ, lived in the same *titulus*-church, seriously maltreating herself because of the death of her sister. Many upper-class Christians, together with Bishop Pius, came to her for the sake of comforting her; your brother Novatus had also come to her, consoling her—(Novatus), who is our brother in the Lord; and he restored many Christian poor from his own resources, and ministered to all of them from his own resources in honour of this same virgin Praxedis, asking in his prayers that she merit indulgence. He also commended you frequently to the blessed Bishop Pius, as he was about to approach the altar of the Lord. It subsequently happened, after a year and twenty-eight days, that Novatus, having fallen ill, was prevented from visiting the blessed virgin Praxedis. And thus, with Bishop Pius, together with the virgin Praxedis, thinking about all the Christians, he looks for Novatus among them; when he had heard from them that he had fallen ill, they were all saddened.

6. Then the blessed Praxedis says to our father Bishop Pius: 'Let your holy self command that we go to him, in case through our visit and your prayers the Lord might save him.' When this view found favour with all of us, we arose at night and went to him; Novatus, the man of God, seeing that we had all got together to come to him, began to give thanks to God, that he had deserved to be visited by the holy Bishop Pius and the virgin of the Lord, together with my humble self. And we remained in his house for eight days and nights. During these days he found it appropriate to bequeath to me and the blessed virgin [Praxedis] his entire estate. With these matters arranged thus, he [Novatus] passed on the thirteenth day to the Lord.²⁵ We sent the written account of his passing to you, together with the endorsement of the blessed bishop of the apostolic see, Pius, and Praxedis, the virgin of Christ, since it was appropriate to inform you concerning the estate of your brother, so that your own state of affairs may be preserved in every respect. The reply of Timothy the priest was delivered by Eusebius, subdeacon of the Roman church.

7. Timothy the priest sends best wishes in the Lord to his holy brother Pastor the priest and to his most holy sister Praxedis. Most willingly showing our obedience to you wherever you might have need of us, we beseech your Holiness that you deign to commend us humble folk to the memory of the Holy Apostles, and to St Pius the bishop of the apostolic see, and to all the saints. I, a humble man, am filled with great joy on hearing that you deigned to write to me. Whence your holy self should know that my conscience is

cripta ottagona'); Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 130–7; R. Giuliani, 'Priscillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 262–9; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 59–71. Note, however, that the tombs of Pudentiana and Praxedis have never been identified in the cemetery of Priscilla, although they are thought to have been located in the 'octagonal crypt' ('La cripta ottagona').

²⁵ There is no commemoration of Novatus against 20 June in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III, p. 654).

amenable to what you have written to me about [i.e. the disposition of his brother's estate]; and what pleased my brother also pleases me, your servant: that is, that what he left be subject to your judgement and that of the holy virgin [Praxedis], and that you have the authority to dispose of those (possessions) according to whatever suits you. I am filled with joy by this letter; and I handed it over to be read to the holy Bishop Pius. When he had read it, he gave thanks to God.

8. At that same time Praxedis, the Lord's virgin, having accepted this authority, asked the blessed Bishop Pius to consecrate the baths of Novatus,²⁶ which at that time were not in use, as a church, because it appeared that there was a large and spacious building in them. This found favour with St Pius the bishop; and he consecrated the baths of Novatus as a church, in the name of the blessed virgin Pudenciana, in the *Vicus Patricius*.²⁷ He also dedicated another (church) in the name of the holy virgin Praxedis within the city of Rome, in the *vicus* which is called *Lateranus*,²⁸ where he established a Roman *titulus*-church;²⁹ in this place he consecrated a baptistery on 12 May. After two years there was a great persecution of Christians, and many were crowned with martyrdom. At that time Praxedis, the Lord's virgin, hid many Christians in the aforementioned *titulus*-church, whom she fed with food and with the word of God. It was then reported to the emperor Antoninus that gatherings of Christians were taking place in the *titulus* of Praxedis. He immediately sent (troops) and arrested many of them; among them he arrested Semetrius the priest, along with twenty-two others,³⁰ and ordered that they be put to death without trial. At night the blessed Praxedis recovered their bodies and buried them in the cemetery of Priscilla on 26 May. Then the Lord's virgin, hampered by severe bodily affliction, lamented to the Lord with intimate sighs, and

²⁶ On the baths of Novatus, see Platner–Ashby, p. 532, and esp. F. M. Tommasi, 'Thermae Novati / Novatianae', *LTUR* V, p. 62. The name is found in no other source. Excavations during the 1930s identified what some believe to have been a bath complex (see n. 6); and to these baths may have belonged the fragment of an inscription found in S. Pudenziana: 'Maximus has olim thermas [...]' (*CIL* VI, no. 29769).

²⁷ There is no mention of the baths of Novatus in the description of the founding of the *titulus*-church (c. 2). On the question of whether the circular structures revealed by excavation were originally baths (*thermae*), or merely water fountains (*nymphaea*), see n. 7.

²⁸ The *Vicus Lateranus* (or perhaps more correctly *Latercius*) was apparently a road in the vicinity of the Lateran, the precise location of which cannot be established, because the precise location of the *titulus*-church of Praxedis is itself uncertain (see p. 310). See S. Serra, 'Vicus Lateranus / Latercius', *LTUR* V, p. 173.

²⁹ On the *titulus*-church of S. Praxedis, see nn. 12–13.

³⁰ On Semetrius the priest, see *BSS* XI, col. 1166 [A. Amore], and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 61. Semetrius is commemorated on 26 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 653), and his burial in the cemetery of Priscilla is recorded in the seventh-century *Notitia ecclesiarum* (Appendix IV (a) [§3], p. 660). The fame of this obscure martyr led to the foundation of a monastery in his name, on the Via Appia, by the late sixth century (it is mentioned in a letter of Gregory the Great): Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 96–9, and M. Cecchelli, 'S. Simetrius monasterium', *LTUR* IV, pp. 328–9.

prayed that she would be found worthy to be taken safely out of this world. Her prayers and tears were received in heaven. Fifty-four days after the martyrdom of the aforementioned saints, that is, on 21 July, she passed to the Lord.³¹ I, Pastor the priest, buried her next to her father Pudens on the Via Salaria, in the cemetery of Priscilla, where their prayers flourish up to the present day, through the efficacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is honour and dominion throughout ages eternal. Amen.

³¹ St Praxedis is commemorated against 21 July in a brief entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 655).

XVI

SS. Polychronius and Parmenius, Abdon and Sennes, Pope Sixtus II, Laurence, and Hippolytus

506 × 514; relevant to the cemetery of Pontianus (Via Portuense); the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia); the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia); the basilica and cemetery of St Laurence (Via Tiburtina); the cemetery of Hippolytus (Via Tiburtina); and the cemetery *ad clivum cucumeris* (Via Salaria Vecchia)

The present *passio* is a long and sprawling work which records the martyrdoms of a large number of saints whose connections are tenuous in the extreme.¹ The organizing principle is that all the martyrdoms are said to have taken place under the emperor Decius (or under his successor, Claudius (II)), and that the martyrdoms are narrated in a sequence determined by the liturgical calendar, beginning with the martyrdom of St Polychronius on 17 February (c. 2) and ending later in the year with those of forty-six soldiers (including Theodosius, Lucius, Marcus, and Peter) on 25 October (c. 35). The core of the narrative is constituted by the martyrdoms of Pope Sixtus II and his archdeacon Laurence (cc. 11–28); for this core the author drew on the earlier *passio vetus* of SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus (no. VI), but he amplified this work by incorporating many other martyr narratives at both beginning and end, and by adding much detail to the martyrdoms which make up the core; hence the present work is often referred to as the *passio recentior*.² This *passio recentior* narrates the following martyrdoms, listed separately in *BHL* as follows:

Passio SS. Polychronii et Parmenii (17 February): *BHL* 6884

Passio SS. Abdon et Sennes (30 July): *BHL* 6

¹ Listed *CPL* 2219; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 183–4, 220, and 237–40; Delehaye, ‘Recherches sur le légendier romain’; and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 177–92. There are also many relevant entries in *BSS*, which are listed separately below.

² See Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 184–5.

Passio S. Sixti papae (6 August): BHL 7801

Passio S. Laurentii (10 August): BHL 4753

Passio S. Hippolyti (13 August): BHL 3961

Passio SS. Irenaei et Abundii (26 August): BHL 4464

But the narrative also incorporates many incidental martyrdoms, as will be clear from the following summary.

The emperor Decius travelled to Persia, leaving Galba in charge at Rome; while in Persia he discovered a Christian bishop in Babylon, together with his priests Parmenius, Elymas, and Christotelus, who were all detained and ordered to sacrifice (c. 1). Polychronius was brought before Decius, and, after interrogation and his refusal to sacrifice, was beaten to death (c. 2). Decius then proceeded to Cordula, where he tried Parmenius, Elymas, and Christotelus, who were sentenced to death by being burned alive; two local subkings named Abdon and Sennes recovered their bodies and buried them near their estate at Cordula (c. 3). When this was reported to Decius, he arrested Abdon and Sennes (c. 4). Then two Christian noblemen, named Olympiades and Maximus, were denounced to Decius (c. 5). Decius handed them over to the deputy of the diocese, named Vitellius Anisius, who ordered them to be beaten to death; their bodies were recovered and buried by kinsmen of Abdon and Sennes (c. 6). Meanwhile Galba had died, and Decius was forced to return to Rome, bringing Abdon and Sennes with him, so that they could be shown off as captives of war to the Roman populace (c. 7). Decius held a tribunal in the Temple of Tellus and summoned Abdon and Sennes to appear before him; they were ordered to sacrifice, but refused (c. 8). The next day Decius mounted a spectacle in the amphitheatre, and condemned Abdon and Sennes to the beasts, but the beasts (lions and bears) refused to touch them (c. 9). Gladiators were ordered to kill them; their bodies lay hidden until the time of Constantine, when they revealed themselves in a vision and were buried in the cemetery of Pontianus (c. 10). Then Decius and the (urban) prefect ordered Pope Sixtus to be brought before them for trial at the Temple of Tellus (c. 11). Sixtus was ordered to sacrifice, and was taken to the Temple of Mars; when he refused, he was remanded in custody in the Mamertine prison, together with his deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus (c. 12). At this point Pope Sixtus consigned to Laurence, his archdeacon, all the property of the Church (c. 13). Laurence used the resulting funds to feed the poor; he came to a house filled with Christians on the Caelian Hill; the house belonged to the widow Cyriaca, whom Laurence managed to cure of cerebral pain (c. 14). He then found many more Christians in a house belonging to Narcissus on the *Vicus Canarius*, and distributed alms to them; he also cured a blind man named Crescentio (c. 15). He then learned that many Christians were hiding in the crypt of Nepotianus on the *Vicus Patricius*; among them he discovered Justinus the priest (c. 16). Meanwhile, Pope Sixtus and his deacons, Felicissimus

and Agapitus, were brought once again before the tribunal of Decius and Valerian, the prefect, at the Temple of Tellus; they were sentenced to sacrifice at the Temple of Mars on the Via Appia, outside the city gate; but Sixtus uttered an imprecation in the name of Christ and part of the temple collapsed (c. 17). Sixtus and his two deacons were decapitated on the nearby Hill of Mars; their bodies were recovered at night, and Sixtus was buried in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, and Felicissimus and Agapitus in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the same road (c. 18). Soldiers then arrested Laurence, who was asked to hand over the treasures of the church; in order to enact the handover, Laurence was committed to Hippolytus, the deputy (c. 19). While in prison, Laurence healed and baptized a blind man named Lucillus; Hippolytus was able to observe this miracle (c. 20). As a result of this, Hippolytus asked to become a Christian; he was duly baptized, together with nineteen other persons of his household, and Laurence was given three days to hand over the treasures of the church (c. 21). Laurence then assembled all the blind, lame, weak, and poor Christians and hid them in the house of Hippolytus; when he was summoned to the palace, Laurence presented all these poor people as the 'treasures of the Church' (c. 22). Decius, in a rage, commanded that Laurence be beaten and tortured (c. 23). Then Decius had Laurence brought to the Palace of Tiberius, where the beatings and other tortures continued (cc. 24–5). One of the soldiers who was witnessing the torture saw an angel standing beside Laurence, and was duly converted, as a result of which he was sentenced to capital punishment, after which he was buried by Justinus, the priest, in a crypt in the *Ager Veranus* (c. 26). Then Decius asked that Laurence be brought before him in the Palace of Sallustius, where he was shown a large variety of instruments of torture (c. 27). In the end, Laurence was placed on an iron bed, under which a fire was kindled; when he was taunted by Decius and Valerian, Laurence said, 'You have roasted one part; turn over the other and eat', and then died (c. 28). Decius and Valerian walked back to the Tiberian Palace, leaving the body unattended; Hippolytus took the body to the estate of a widow named Cyriaca, on the Via Tiburtina, where it was buried (c. 29). Three days later, Hippolytus was arrested and brought before Decius; when he announced that he had become a Christian, he was severely tortured (c. 30). Decius ordered Valerian to confiscate all the property of Hippolytus; when they went to his house, they found there the entire household, including Concordia, the Christian nurse of Hippolytus, who refused to recant her Christianity and was accordingly beaten to death; Hippolytus was taken out on the Via Tiburtina, tied to wild horses, and dragged to death in a thicket of thistles and abandoned at the edge of the *Ager Veranus* (c. 31). Justinus the priest buried the body there, and then set out to look for the body of Concordia; meanwhile a soldier named Porphyrius, thinking that the body of Concordia might have concealed on it gold and jewels, approached a sewer-attendant named Irenaeus, who was secretly a Christian and who, together with his colleague Abundius, was able to locate the body of Concordia

in the sewer, which Justinus buried near to that of Hippolytus; as a result of this, Irenaeus and Abundius were arrested and killed and dumped in the sewer, whence Justinus retrieved their bodies as well, and buried them near the tomb of St Laurence on the *Ager Veranus* (c. 32). Decius then mounted a spectacle in the amphitheatre, but when he arrived there he was seized by a demon and was taken back to the palace, where he died three days later; his wife Tryphonia, although a pagan, released all the Christians from prison, and then, together with her daughter Cyrilla, approached Justinus the priest and asked to be baptized, after which she died while praying (c. 33). Justinus the priest convened his clergy and elected the venerable Dionysius as successor to Pope Sixtus; but Claudius, the successor of Decius as emperor, summoned Cyrilla to his presence and, when she refused to recant her Christianity, she was executed by sword; she was buried by Justinus near the tomb of St Laurence (c. 34). At the same time, Claudius stationed armed soldiers in the Sallustian Palace, and ordered all those who had been baptized as Christians to identify themselves, as a result of which forty-six Christian soldiers were taken outside the Porta Salaria and executed; Justinus the priest recovered their bodies and buried them all in a cemetery on the Via Salaria at the *Clivus Cucumeris*; among them were four soldiers named Theodosius, Lucius, Marcus, and Peter (c. 35).

From this summary it will be clear that the entire *passio* is a preposterous work of fiction. Sixtus II, Laurence, and Hippolytus are known from reliable sources to have been executed during the persecution of Valerian in AD 258, not during that of Decius (249–51). In any case, the real emperor Decius never visited Persia and did not die at Rome. The name of the urban prefect in this *passio*, ‘Valerian’, was evidently prompted by the emperor of that name, just as the name of the co-emperor (?) ‘Galba’, who was reportedly left in charge (of what?) when ‘Decius’ went to Persia (c. 1), recalls that of the real emperor Galba (AD 69), but may result from confusion with the name of Trebonianus Gallus, who was the successor, not the predecessor, of Decius. Gallus was emperor from 251 to 253; ‘Claudius’, who is described as the successor of Decius (c. 34) and who is presumably to be identified as Claudius II Gothicus, did not become emperor until 268, and is not known to have been a persecutor of Christians. But there is little point in analysing the pseudo-imperial history which is purveyed by the author of this *passio*. The martyrdoms and burials of the principal actors of this *passio*—Abdon and Sennes, Sixtus II, Laurence, and Hippolytus—have been discussed with respect to their occurrence in the *passio vetus* (no. VI), and do not need to be repeated here. I confine my discussion to those martyrs who are additional to the present *passio recentior*.

St Polychronius (c. 2).³ The first of the substantial additions made by the present author to the *passio vetus* pertains to Polychronius, said to be bishop of

³ See BSS X, cols. 990–1 [J.-M. Sauget].

Babylon (the siting of the episode in Persia was presumably prompted by mention of the expeditions of Decius in Persia in the *passio vetus*). A bishop of Babylon called Polychronius is of course a fictional creation; but the name was possibly borrowed from that of a bishop of Jerusalem named Polychronius, who figures prominently in a work of the early sixth century (hence contemporary with our *passio recentior*) concerning Pope Sixtus III (432–40) entitled *Gesta de Xysti purgatione et Polychronii accusatione* [CPL 1682; BHL 7813],⁴ one of a group of texts called *Apocrypha Symmachiana* [CPL 1679–82] which were generated by the Laurentian schism during the years 498–514. It is possible, as Cécile Lanéry suggests, that the mention of a bishop named Polychronius in a work concerning a pope named Sixtus prompted the present author to introduce the same name here (albeit in a work concerned with a different pope named Sixtus).⁵ In any event, we are told nothing about Bishop Polychronius of Babylon save that, as a Christian, he was brought before Decius and executed; his body was left in front of the temple of Saturn (which, according to the *passio*, had been constructed in Babylon by Decius), and subsequently buried before the walls at the gate of Babylon by two subkings (who are subsequently identified as Abdon and Sennes), on 17 February.⁶

SS. *Parmenius, Elymas, Chrysotelus, and others* (cc. 2–3).⁷ These saints, who are described as priests in the clergy of Bishop Polychronius, together with the deacons Lucius and Mucius, are inventions of the present author. According to his narrative, following the arrest and execution of Polychronius, they were bound in chains and taken by Decius to the (Persian) city of Cordula.⁸ There they were tried and executed, on 22 April; their bodies were recovered and buried by Abdon and Sennes on their own estate, near the city of Cordula.⁹

⁴ The *Gesta de Xysti purgatione* are ed. E. Wirbelauer, *Zwei Päpste in Rom: der Konflikt zwischen Laurentius und Symmachus (498–514). Studien und Texte* (Munich, 1993), pp. 262–83, esp. pp. 272–82. According to this text, Polychronius was accused of embezzlement before Pope Sixtus III, but was eventually pardoned because of his charitable work with the poor. As Wirbelauer points out (p. 273, n. 71), the Greek name ‘Polychronius’ (πολυ-χρόνιος) is a calque on Latin *Iuvenalis*, which is the attested form of the name of the bishop of Jerusalem from 418/22–458. On this Bishop Juvenal, see E. Honigmann, ‘Juvenal of Jerusalem’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), 209–79, and Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, II, p. 101.

⁵ ‘Hagiographie’, p. 186.

⁶ There is an entry for St Polychronius against 17 February in the Echternach manuscript of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (ed. de Rossi and Duchesne, p. 22: ‘et in bab[ylonia] policoni’); but, as Delehay notes, the entry probably derives from the present *passio* (‘Recherches sur le légendaire romain’, p. 37), not vice versa.

⁷ See BSS X, cols. 339–40 [J.-M. Sauget].

⁸ There is no city named ‘Cordula’ in ‘Persia’; possibly the name derives by confusion from the territory known as Corduena, which lies to the east of Nisibis (in the far east of present-day Turkey); see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 89 (E3).

⁹ Once again, there is an entry for these martyrs against 22 April in the Echternach manuscript of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (ed. de Rossi and Duchesne, p. 47: ‘in cordua civi [tate] parmeni et limas crisoli presbyterum et diaconorum luci et mucii’). The combination

SS. *Abdon and Sennes* (cc. 4, 7–10).¹⁰ These two saints have been taken over from the *passio vetus*, but the earlier account has been embellished by making them Christian subkings of Persia (who buried the bodies of Parmenius and his colleagues on their private estate). By making them subkings, the author supplies a more plausible motive for Decius' taking them back to Rome: as captive enemy kings they could be paraded in the amphitheatre, to the emperor's great credit, before being publicly executed. But the remainder of the narrative concerning Abdon and Sennes—their trial, condemnation *ad bestias*, the failure of the beasts to attack them, their eventual execution by gladiators, and their burial in the cemetery of Pontianus (on the Via Portuense)—derives from the *passio vetus*.

SS. *Olympiades and Maximus* (cc. 5–6).¹¹ The brief account of these two martyrs, who are described as (Persian) noblemen who were betrayed to Decius and subsequently tried and executed by the deputy (*uicarius*) of the praetorian prefecture of the East, responsible for the diocese of Oriens, is an addition to the narrative of the *passio vetus*. They are not attested in any other source.¹²

Pope *Sixtus II* (cc. 11–13, 17–18).¹³ After the execution of SS. Olympiades and Maximus, Decius returns to Rome, where, after disposing of SS. Abdon and Sennes, he turns his attention to Pope Sixtus II. The narrative concerning Pope Sixtus II—his trial before Decius and the urban prefect Valerian at the Temple of Tellus, his eventual execution, on 6 August, at the temple of Mars on the Via Appia, and his subsequent burial in the 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus—is taken from the *passio vetus*.

SS. *Felicissimus and Agapitus* (cc. 17–18).¹⁴ One significant addition made by the present author to the narrative of the martyrdom of Pope Sixtus II is the mention of his two deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, who are said to have been executed with him at the temple of Mars on the Via Appia, but who were buried apart from him in the cemetery of Praetextatus, also on the Via Appia. We know from a letter of Bishop Cyprian that Pope Sixtus was executed together with four of his deacons on 6 August 258;¹⁵ and they are listed alongside Sixtus in the *Depositio martyrum* against 6 August: 'Pope Sixtus II, in the cemetery of Callistus; and in the cemetery of Praetextatus, Agapitus, and Felicissimus' (Appendix I, p. 635). The entry for Sixtus in the *Liber pontificalis* (c. 530) adds the names of all the deacons in question, including Felicissimus

of this entry with that for Polychronius on 17 February confirms Delehaye's suggestion that both entries derive from the present *passio*.

¹⁰ See BSS I, cols. 50–3 [F. Caraffa].

¹¹ See BSS IX, cols. 77–8 [J.-M. Sauget].

¹² See Delehaye, 'Recherches sur le légendier romain', pp. 41–2.

¹³ See BSS XI, cols. 1256–61 [S. Carletti].

¹⁴ See BSS V, cols. 602–3 [F. Caraffa].

¹⁵ Cyprian, *Ep.* lxxx. 1. 4: 'Xistum autem in cimiterio animadversum sciatis VIII id. Aug. die et cum eo diacones quattuor' (CCSL III C, p. 627).

and Agapitus: 'He [Sixtus] was beheaded, and with him six others, the deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus, Ianuarius, Magnus, Vincent, and Stephen, on 6 August'.¹⁶ A metrical inscription composed for Felicissimus and Agapitus was recovered almost intact by Enrico Josi in 1927,¹⁷ and the fragments allow the Damascan inscription to be identified in medieval *sylogae*. Its text is as follows:

Please note: this tomb, too, contains the heavenly bodies
of saints, whom the palace of heaven suddenly carried off.
They were companions of the unconquerable Cross, and likewise attendants
of the holy bishop; having followed his example and his faith
they sought the aetherial dwellings and realms of the holy.
The unique glory of the Roman populace rejoices in them,
because, with Sixtus as their leader, they were worthy
to achieve the triumph of Christ.

POPE DAMASUS, FOR FELICISSIMUS AND AGAPITUS.¹⁸

An identification of the site of their tomb in the cemetery of Praetextatus has been suggested, but it is not regarded as certain.¹⁹

St Laurence (cc. 13–16, 19–28).²⁰ The extensive account of the martyrdom of St Laurence forms the central element in the present *passio recentior*; it is developed, with many additions and interpolations, from the account in the *passio vetus*, from which it retains the two distinctive anecdotes concerning Laurence: that, as a result of a play on words, he could present a crowd of poor people to the emperor and claim that they were the 'treasures' of the Church; and that, when he was being roasted alive, he was able to formulate the witticism and deliver it contemptuously to Decius: 'you have roasted one part; turn over the other and eat.'²¹

St Cyriaca (cc. 14, 29).²² Cyriaca is the name of a widow, who had a house on the Caelian, in which she allowed a community of Christians to live. Laurence was able miraculously to cure her from a longstanding cerebral pain. The mention of this widow is an addition made by the author of the present *passio recentior*; note that it contains no statement that she was a martyr. In a subsequent chapter, it is stated that the *Ager Veranus*, on which

¹⁶ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 34; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 155; trans. Davis, p. 10.

¹⁷ E. Josi, 'Le iscrizioni damasiane', pp. 234–48.

¹⁸ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 152–6 [no. 25]; Ferrua and Carletti, no. 10 (pp. 37–8); Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 126–8; trans. Appendix II (i), pp. 642–3 and see discussion by Delehay, 'Recherches sur le légendier romain', pp. 43–9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 178–9.

¹⁹ Tolotti, 'Ricerca dei luoghi venerati', pp. 71–87.

²⁰ See BSS VIII, cols. 108–21 [S. Carletti].

²¹ On literary treatments of this witticism (alluded to by Ambrose, Prudentius, and the author of the *passio vetus*), see Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Assum est, versa et manduca', pp. 63–82.

²² See BSS III, cols. 1290–1 [A. Amore].

the cemetery of St Laurence was established, was an estate belonging to Cyriaca,²³ and for this reason she is included among Roman martyrs.²⁴

SS. *Justinus and Crescentio* (cc. 15–16).²⁵ While St Laurence was doing the rounds of Rome looking for Christian poor, he came to the house of one Narcissus on the *Vicus Canarius*; here he found a number of Christians, including a blind man named Crescentio (whom he was able to heal). He then went to the *Vicus Patricius*, where he found a number of Christians living in a crypt; among these was Justinus the priest, who figures in subsequent chapters as a faithful Christian who retrieves and buries the bodies of martyrs, including Laurence (c. 26) and Hippolytus (c. 32), as well as Concordia, Irenaeus, and Abundius (c. 32), Tryphonia and Cyrilla (c. 34), and finally the Forty-Six Soldiers (c. 35). Crescentio and Justinus are commemorated together in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 4 August, where they are said to be buried in the cemetery of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina (Appendix III, p. 655). There is no indication in the present *passio recentior* that either Crescentio or Justinus was a martyr.²⁶

St Romanus (c. 26). The account of the martyrdom of Romanus is one of the additions made by the author to the narrative of the *passio vetus*; according to this account, Romanus was one of the soldiers present while St Laurence was being tortured; feeling great pity for Laurence, he brought a pitcher of water to relieve his sufferings, and asked to be baptized; whereupon he was brought before Decius and sentenced to capital punishment, which was carried out outside the Porta Salaria on 9 August. He was buried in a crypt in the *Ager Veranus* on the Via Tiburtina.²⁷ His death is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 9 August: ‘<Rome, on the Via> Tiburtina, Romanus’ (Appendix III, p. 655).

St Hippolytus (cc. 19–22, 30–1).²⁸ The narrative of the martyrdom of Hippolytus essentially follows that of the *passio vetus*, with a few significant changes: whereas in the *passio vetus* Hippolytus was a military commander (*dux*) (VI.5), here he is described as a ‘deputy’ (*uicarius*) (c. 19), that is, the deputy to the praetorian prefect of Italy, with jurisdiction over suburbicarian Italy. As such, it is a nice question whether the urban prefect, Valerian, would have had the authority or seniority to bring the deputy of the praetorian prefect to trial, let alone to pass the death sentence on him; but the author of the *passio recentior* was scarcely concerned with legal niceties.

²³ Cf. the statement in the life of Pope Silvester in the *Liber pontificalis*: ‘possessio cuiusdam Cyriacae religiosae feminae quod fiscus occupaverat tempore persecutionis, Veranum fundum’ (ed. Mommsen, p. 64; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 182; trans. Davis, p. 23: ‘the property of one Cyriaces, a religious woman, of which the fisc had taken possession in the time of the persecution, the farm Veranus’).

²⁴ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 96–7.

²⁵ See BSS IV, col. 293 [A. Amore].

²⁶ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 97–8.

²⁷ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 97.

²⁸ See BSS VII, cols. 868–75 (including St Concordia) [A. Amore].

St Concordia (cc. 31–2). Concordia represents an addition made by the present author to the martyrdom of Hippolytus; here she is presented as the nurse of Hippolytus; on stating to Valerian the urban prefect that she was a Christian, she was beaten to death, and her body was thrown into the sewer. It was subsequently retrieved by Irenaeus and Abundius (see next section), and reverently buried on 25 August by Justinus in the cemetery of Hippolytus on the *Ager Veranus*. Her death, however, is commemorated on 22 February in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, with a clear indication that she was buried in the cemetery of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina: ‘Rome, on the Via Tiburtina at S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, the death of St Concordia’ (see Appendix III, p. 652).²⁹

SS. *Irenaeus and Abundius* (c. 32).³⁰ Irenaeus is described as a sewer attendant (*cloacarius*); it was he who located the body of St Concordia and who, with the help of his colleague Abundius, was able to retrieve it and consign it to Justinus, who saw to its burial. As a result of this activity, Irenaeus and Abundius were murdered in the sewer by the orders of Valerian, on 26 August; their bodies were recovered and buried by Justinus. They are commemorated on 23 August in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 656).³¹

SS. *Tryphonia and Cyrilla* (c. 33–4).³² These ladies are conceived (invented) by the author as the wife and daughter, respectively, of the emperor Decius. After the death of Decius they sought baptism at the hands of Justinus the priest. Tryphonia died almost immediately afterwards, while deep in prayer, but Cyrilla was summoned to the presence of the emperor Claudius; on refusing to renounce her Christianity, she was executed by sword, and her body left for the dogs. Justinus retrieved her body and buried it in the cemetery of Hippolytus on 28 October.³³

Text. The present *passio recentior* enjoyed huge circulation, either whole or in parts: some 230 witnesses are listed in *BHLms*, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further seventy-six, dating from the ninth century and later.³⁴ The text translated here is that of Hippolyte Delehaye, which is based on three manuscript witnesses (Vatican City, Archivio di S. Pietro, A. 4 (s. xi); Brussels, Bibliotheca Bollandiana, 14 (s. ix^{2/4}); and Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, 144 (s. x)).³⁵ The text of the *passio recentior* was composed in the immediate

²⁹ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 102.

³⁰ See BSS VII, cols. 900–1 [A. Amore].

³¹ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 95–6.

³² See BSS XII, cols. 657–8 [A. Amore].

³³ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 102–3. Bonfiglio (*ibid.* p. 103) notes evidence that the tombs of Concordia, and those of Tryphonia and Cyrilla, in the cemetery of Hippolytus, are possibly to be identified with apertures in the galleries near to the burial of Hippolytus himself; see further Fiocchi Nicolai, ‘*Itinera ad sanctos*. Testimonianze monumentali del passaggio dei pellegrini nei santuari del suburbio romano’, pp. 768 and 771–5.

³⁴ ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 189–90, n. 400.

³⁵ ‘Recherches sur le légendier romain’, pp. 72–98.

aftermath of the Laurentian schism (506 × 514), judging from the inclusion of St Polychronius, apparently taken over from the *Gesta de Xysti purgatione et Polychronii accusatione* (CPL 1682; cf. n. 4).

1. When the tempest of persecution arose under Decius, many Christians were put to death.³⁶ Leaving Galba in charge at Rome,³⁷ Decius went to Persia.³⁸ While he was prosecuting his war against the Persians, he arrived in a city called Pontica³⁹ and established his residence there, although he continued to prosecute the war. Decius then ascended Medes' Mountain;⁴⁰ and having engaged in battle with his Roman armies, he gained victory and killed a great number of Persians. And he gained control of the following cities:⁴¹ Babylonia, Bactria,⁴² Hyrcania,⁴³ Cordulia,⁴⁴ and Assyria, in all of which he found many Christians, whom he put to death by torture and punishments. At the same time he discovered in the city of Babylon a bishop named Polychronius, together with the priests Parmenius, Elymas, and Chrysotelus, and the deacons Lucius and Mucius. When he had arrested them, he straightway ordered them to be taken to sacrifice to the idols. Then Polychronius responded at once, saying: 'We offer ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, but we never bow down before demons or silly handmade idols.' Decius then imprisoned him together with his clergy. And he built in that same city a temple to Saturn, and he made for that god a likeness out of plaster, and gilded it, and then wrote out a letter and sent it to the prefect Valerian, as follows:

To the illustrious and magnificent Turgius Apollonius Valerian, prefect,⁴⁵ Decius Caesar sends greetings. Know that our love for you is made manifest

³⁶ Decius was emperor 249–51, and the instigator of the first state-sponsored persecution of Christians, on which see Introduction, p. 8, n. 15.

³⁷ Delehayé assumed that 'Galba' was the urban prefect ('Recherches sur le légendier romain', p. 38), but the text does not say so; furthermore, it would be odd, if 'Galba' was the urban prefect, for Decius to write to the 'prefect' Turgius Apollonius Valerian as soon as he reached Persia (c. 1). It is also possible that the name 'Galba' is a corruption of Gallus (C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus), the name of the successor—not the predecessor—of Decius. This Gallus was co-emperor from ?June 251—?22 October 253. In this case, the author seems to have understood 'Galba' as co-ruler with Decius.

³⁸ The emperor Decius never set foot in Persia. He has been confused, perhaps intentionally, with Valerian (253–60), who conducted extensive campaigns in Persia, and was captured and died there.

³⁹ Pontica is not a city, but a diocese of the Roman empire (now embracing much of central Turkey) containing the provinces of Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Pontus.

⁴⁰ There is no such mountain; but the entire area here envisaged by the author is mountainous.

⁴¹ Note that all of the places mentioned are territories; none of them is a city.

⁴² The territory of Bactria (not Bactriana) lies in what is now Afghanistan.

⁴³ Hyrcania is the name of the territory at the lower south-east corner of the Caspian Sea (which was called the *Hyrcanium Mare* in Latin), now in north-eastern Iran.

⁴⁴ There is no such place (city or territory) as Cordulia; possibly the name is a corruption of Corduena: see n. 6.

⁴⁵ It is clear from the sequel that this Valerian is being envisaged by our author as the urban prefect (*praefectus urbi*). The names which the author supplies for him show that he was not

and that we have accomplished satisfactory victories in favour of our gods. Agree to this, dear and distinguished colleague, that you hasten frequently to placate our gods through sacrifices and the burning of incense; through their bounties we may always rejoice in victory. And I insist urgently that if you find any profane Christians in the City, that you do not hesitate to have them immediately dragged out to be punished, because they refuse to prostrate themselves before our gods and sacrifice to them. Do this so that we may have these gods appeased and they may be victorious on our behalf, so that Roman liberty may be extended. Farewell, dear colleague.

At that same time he completed his temple to Saturn in Babylon.

2. Then he commanded Bishop Polychronius to be brought before him, together with his priests and deacons. By way of interrogation he said to him: 'Are you that sacrilegious Polychronius who neither fears the gods nor obeys the edicts of our emperors?' Polychronius said not a word to him. Decius accordingly said to his clergy: 'Your leader has fallen silent.' Parmenius, the priest, replied as follows: 'Our father has not fallen silent, but he is following the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Creator, to the effect that the holy mouth which was purified by our Creator not be polluted; for our Lord commanded the apostles thus: "Do not cast your pearls before swine, lest they tread on them with their feet and (strike you in retaliation)".'⁴⁶ Does it seem right to you that what once was purified should be fouled by filth?' Decius said: 'Are you calling me filth?' And in his rage he ordered that his tongue be cut out. And when Parmenius' tongue had been cut out, he began to shout out, saying, 'Blessed father Polychronius, pray for me, because I see the Holy Spirit dwelling in you and signing your holy mouth and dropping honey from a honeycomb into my mouth.' Decius said: 'Polychronius, sacrifice to the gods and be my friend and commend both me and my temple.' Polychronius did not say a single word in reply. Then Decius, enraged, ordered that his mouth be smashed; and raising his eyes to heaven, Polychronius gave up the ghost. In that same hour Decius had his body placed before the temple, and set out by foot for Cordula, on 17 February. On the same night two subkings, who were secretly Christians, came and carried off the body of Polychronius and buried it before the walls of the gate of Babylon. And Decius ordered the priests and deacons of Polychronius to be bound in chains and taken with him. When they were led out, the chains fell from their neck and hands.

3. When Decius arrived in the city of Cordula, he ordered, in a fury, that the priests and deacons be brought before him, and he accosted them, saying: 'Do you fools wish to die? Here is my order to you: Sacrifice to the immortal

intended to be identical with the emperor of that name (who was P. Licinius Valerianus). No urban prefect named Valerian is attested at any time in the third century.

⁴⁶ Matt. 7: 6.

gods.’ In reply Parmenius the priest began in a clear voice to say: ‘Poor wretch, are you compelling us to prostrate ourselves before handmade idols? Unhappy man, you should prostrate yourself before Christ, the Creator of all things, not before handmade idols. For you shall perish, and your gods with you, whom you wrongfully worship.’ Decius ordered them all to be strung up on the rack; when they had been tied to it with cords, they all began to give thanks to God, and to say to Parmenius the priest: ‘Say a prayer over us.’ Parmenius replied: ‘Let God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant the comfort of the Holy Spirit, He Who reigns forever and ever.’ And all the other priests and deacons replied, ‘Amen’. Then Decius, enraged, said: ‘That a man without a tongue should be able to state this case is evidently magic.’ Parmenius replied: ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, who made a deaf mute speak,⁴⁷ granted to me, a sinner, the ability to speak without a tongue. But you have fallen silent in the midst of speaking.’ In that same hour Decius ordered them to be burned alive. While they were being burned, a voice from heaven was heard: ‘Come to me, you who are humble of heart.’⁴⁸ Decius said: ‘This truly is magic!’ And he ordered red-hot plates to be applied to their sides, and for them to be raked with claws.⁴⁹ In that same hour he ordered them to be taken down from the rack, and commanded that they be beheaded. When they had been beheaded, they threw their bodies out on to the public way, so they could be guarded so that no one would bury them. Then the subkings, two religious men named Abdon and Sennes, came at night and gathered up the bodies of the holy priests Parmenius, Elymas, and Chrysotelus, and their deacons, Lucius and Mucius, and buried them on their estate near the city of Cordula, on 22 April.

4. At that same time Decius began diligently to seek out Christians, extending his authority throughout all Persia. And those lamps shining under a bushel that could not be hidden were placed on a lamp stand, so that they might illuminate everyone in the house of the Lord.⁵⁰ Then the pagans came to him and said: ‘Look at those men [Abdon and Sennes] for whom you have shed blood to acquire victory: they gather up the bodies of the Christians and bury them on their estate. They do not bow before the gods, nor do they follow your commands to venerate them with sacrifices.’ Decius said: ‘Who are these profaners?’ The reply was given: ‘Abdon and Sennes’. In that same hour Decius ordered Abdon and Sennes to be brought before him. When they arrived in the presence of Decius, he said to them: ‘Have you become so stupid as to have forgotten that as non-worshippers of our gods you have been

⁴⁷ Matt. 9: 32–3; Mark 7: 32–5.

⁴⁸ The author has conflated two verses of Matt. 11: 28–9 (‘Venite ad me . . . quia mitis sum et humilis corde’).

⁴⁹ The sequence of the narrative is confused: presumably the martyrs would have been tortured with red-hot plates and raked with claws *before* being burned alive; in the event they were simply decapitated.

⁵⁰ Matt. 5: 15–16.

handed over to the Romans and to me?’ Abdon replied: ‘We have rather become the victors, through the favour of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who reigns in eternity.’ Enraged, Decius said: ‘Do you not know that your life lies humbly in my hands?’ In reply Abdon said: ‘We humble ourselves before God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our salvation deigned to become earth and to humble Himself.’ Decius then ordered them to be bound in chains and kept in close custody. Then Abdon said to Sennes: ‘Here is the glory, which we have always hoped to receive from the Lord.’

5. On that same day Olympiades and Maximus, two Christian noblemen, were both betrayed to Decius. When they were presented to Decius, he ordered them to be beaten with staves before interrogation, saying: ‘These two, who have abandoned the gods and worship a dead man, are worthy to be handed over to die and to have no hearing set for them.’ Maximus replied: ‘Rightly did you say “a dead man”; but why do you not say that he arose again from the dead?’ Then Decius said to them: ‘Reveal to us the sources of your wealth.’ Olympiades said: ‘Our wealth—gold and jewels and silver—is Christ. Now learn, you wretch, that we have handed over our bodies to you, having cast off all perishable earthly wealth. If you were to consider what you are, you would humble yourself before God your creator, and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. For riches and honours are for (this present) time, for the glory of another person, but for you they mean eternal punishment.’ Decius said to his soldiers: ‘Beat them with staves, because they are mad.’ And when those beating them had become exhausted, Maximus shouted out: ‘Glory to You, Lord Jesus Christ, because You have deigned to count us among Your servants.’⁵¹ Decius, filled with rage, had them beaten with lead-weighted whips, while a herald proclaimed: ‘Do not blaspheme the gods.’ And while they were being beaten, they were comforted all the more, and they shouted out with happy faces, saying: ‘Do what you are doing, do not stop, cleanse what is filthy.’

6. Decius said to his soldiers: ‘Raise them up from the earth and place iron beds where they can see them, and linens and water so that they may sacrifice, and see that they either use them, or else let them be stretched out on the iron beds over burning coals, and thus die.’ And he handed them over to Vitellius Anisius, the deputy (*uicarius*).⁵² Vitellius Anisius said to them: ‘It is well known to you what His Excellency Decius Caesar has commanded, that if anyone should sacrifice and keep the commandments of the emperors, he will be honoured and be a friend of the emperors and be enriched with wealth, honours, and distinctions; but if he does not consent to this, he will expire,

⁵¹ A very similar prayer, beginning with the *Gloria tibi, Domine*, is quoted in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.18).

⁵² This Vitellius Anisius is conceived as being the deputy (*uicarius*) to the praetorian prefect of the East; as such, he had jurisdiction over the diocese of *Oriens* in which Babylon lay (see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 370–1).

wasted away under various kinds of torture.' Maximus replied and said: 'And at that point your tortures are trivial and you too will expire. We do not fear your tortures, but desire them; for we fear eternal punishments, which will torture you⁵³ and your father, the devil.' Vitellius Anisius, the deputy (*uicarius*), filled with rage, ordered that their heads be smashed with axes. And when they had been beaten at length, they gave up the ghost. And Vitellius Anisius ordered that their corpses be left for the dogs; they lay there for five days. Dogs came and growled; and they did not touch the holy bodies. But after five days certain Christians came, noblemen from the kin of Abdon and Sennes, and gathered up their precious bodies and buried them in their own house on 21 March.⁵⁴

7. At that same time it was announced to Decius that Galba had died;⁵⁵ so he set off for Rome. Decius arrived at Rome after four months, bringing with him the blessed subkings Abdon and Sennes, both of them bound in chains for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁵⁶ and for their own distinction, because as noblemen they would provide an exhibit for the Romans. And he commanded Valerian that all Christians should be detained by public authority and locked up. At that same time he detained the blessed old Sixtus, bishop of the Romans, together with all his clergy, and placed them all in public custody; and they were imprisoned for many days.⁵⁷ Then many Christians came to them in order to receive from them the blessing of the sacrament, because the persecution was raging; and thus they came to them in prison and brought their children and their kinsmen from among the pagans; and they were all baptized by the blessed Bishop Sixtus.

8. Then Decius ordered that the entire senate be summoned and held an assembly in the temple of Tellus (*in Tellude*),⁵⁸ together with Valerian the prefect, on 28 July. And when the meeting had been convened, Decius ordered that Abdon and Sennes, the Christian subkings whom he had brought from Persia, be presented to him, now wasted away under torture. And Decius said to the senate: 'Let your assembly hear (this), conscript fathers: the gods and goddesses have delivered ferocious enemies into our hands. Here you have

⁵³ Reading *uos* for *nos* in the text of Delehay.

⁵⁴ It is odd that the text does not specify where they were buried; nor is there an entry for the deposition of SS. Olympiades and Maximus in either the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I) or the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III).

⁵⁵ Gallus (not Galba: see n. 2) died in 253, before 22 October.

⁵⁶ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Sixtus II was pope from 30 August 257 until he was executed on 6 August 258; see *Liber pontificalis* (ed. Mommsen, p. 34; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 155; trans. Davis, pp. 10–11); and see *DACL* XV/1, cols. 1501–15 [M. Combet-Farnoux]; *BSS* XI, cols. 1256–62 [S. Carletti]; and *EP* I, pp. 286–91 [F. Scorza Barcellona].

⁵⁸ On the Temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), and the location of the offices of the prefecture, see no. VII (p. 198, n. 18).

enemies of the state and the Roman empire.' And they were brought in, adorned in gold and precious stones, bound in chains; when all the senators had seen them, they began to marvel at their appearance. The Lord granted such grace to his servants, that there was grief rather than rage at their exhibition. Then Decius ordered Claudius, the priest of the Capitol, to be brought in; and Claudius the priest brought a tripod; and Decius Caesar said to Abdon and Sennes: 'Sacrifice to the gods and be subkings with Roman liberty, and possess all our possessions and the peace of the Roman empire; you will be enriched with riches and wealth and honours. So take counsel among yourselves.' Abdon and Sennes replied to him, in the presence of the entire senate: 'We once, as sinners, duly offered ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ as an offering and sacrifice; you sacrifice to your own gods.' Decius said: 'Terrible tortures should be prepared for these men.' And Decius ordered that ferocious bears and lions be made ready. And Abdon and Sennes said: 'Why do you delay? Do what you think best; but know that we are safe in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is capable of destroying all your plans, and you yourself.'

9. But the next day they came and announced to Decius that the bears and lions had died in their pits. Decius, enraged, ordered that a spectacle be mounted in the amphitheatre.⁵⁹ And it happened that when they came to the amphitheatre, Decius did not want to enter; but he gave the order to Valerian the prefect, saying: 'If they do not worship the Sun god, let them die, torn to bits by the savaging of beasts.' Then Valerian said to Abdon and Sennes: 'Remember your lineage and sacrifice to the Sun god; if you do not do this, you will die from the ravagings of beasts.' Abdon and Sennes replied, saying: 'We have already told you: we worship the Lord Jesus Christ. We never prostrate ourselves to handmade idols, nor worship them.' In that same hour he stripped them and, filled with rage, led them before the statue of the Sun next to the amphitheatre,⁶⁰ and ordered the soldiers to compel them to sacrifice. In contempt they spat at the statue, and the blessed Abdon and Sennes said to Valerian: 'Now do what you are going to do.' Then Valerian issued the command that they be beaten with lead-weighted whips, with a herald saying: 'Do not blaspheme the gods.' And he ordered them to be led into the amphitheatre, so they could be eaten by wild beasts. And when they had entered, Abdon and Sennes said in the presence of Valerian: 'In the name

⁵⁹ As we see from the sequel, with its reference to the likeness of the Sun, the amphitheatre in question is unambiguously meant to be the Flavian Amphitheatre, now usually referred to as the Colosseum, on which see Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', esp. pp. 220 and 238–44; Platner–Ashby, pp. 6–11; Richardson, pp. 7–10; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 276–83; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 164–70; and R. Rea, 'Amphitheatrum', *LTUR* I, pp. 30–5, with further bibliography.

⁶⁰ Nero constructed a colossal bronze statue of himself, 120 feet high, in the vestibule of his Domus Aurea; after Nero's death the emperor Vespasian altered it to become a statue of the Sun; see Platner–Ashby, p. 130; Richardson, pp. 93–4; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, p. 170; and C. Lega, 'Colossus: Nero', *LTUR* I, pp. 295–8.

of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall achieve our crown, which Christ forbids you to have, you foul spirit.' And having made the sign of Christ,⁶¹ they went into the amphitheatre. When they entered the sight of Valerian, naked in the flesh but clothed in the body of Christ, Valerian said: 'Let two lions be released, and four bears.' When they had been released, they came roaring up to the feet of Abdon and Sennes, and in no way did they leave their feet: but rather they guarded them. And Valerian said: 'Their magic arts are evident.' And no one could approach them because of the violence of the beasts.

10. Valerian, filled with rage, ordered that gladiators with tridents⁶² be brought in, so that they could kill them [the martyrs]. When they had been struck down dead, they bound their feet at the command of Valerian and dragged them out and cast them before the statue of the Sun next to the amphitheatre; and their bodies lay there for three days, as an example to other Christians. After three days a certain Cyrinus came, a Christian subdeacon who lived near the amphitheatre, and recovered their bodies by night and buried them in a lead casket in his house, on 30 July.⁶³ Subsequently the bodies of SS. Abdon and Sennes lay hidden for many years up to the times of Constantine; whereupon it happened that, with the blessed martyrs revealing themselves in the times of Constantine,⁶⁴ by now a Christian, their bodies were raised up and translated to the cemetery of Pontianus.⁶⁵

11. At that same time Decius Caesar and Valerian the prefect ordered Bishop Sixtus and his clergy to be brought before them at night, in the temple of Tellus, in the City. Sixtus, born and trained in Athens, originally a philosopher, but later a disciple of Christ,⁶⁶ said to his clergy: 'Brothers and

⁶¹ It is not clear precisely what is meant by the 'sign of Christ'. Note that in c. 15 St Laurence makes the 'sign of Christ' on the eyes of the blind man Crescentio (*et facto signo Christi in oculis eius*), where the context indicates that it probably involved marking a symbolic cross on the eyes or forehead. The phrase (*signum Christi*) is attested from as early as Tertullian, and occurs numerous times in the writings of Augustine.

⁶² The elite gladiator who fought with a net and trident was called a *retiarius*; see Isidore, *Etym.* xviii. 54 ('De retiariis'), and discussion by Sassi, *Il linguaggio gladiatorio*, pp. 162–4. There is an illustration of a *retiarius* on a funeral style from Smyrna, reproduced in Kyle, *Spectacles of Death*, p. 18 (fig. 2).

⁶³ The feast is commemorated against 30 July in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354: 'Abdon and Sennes, in the cemetery of Pontianus, which is (located) *ad Ursum pileatum*' (Appendix I, p. 635).

⁶⁴ The story that the bodies of SS. Abdon and Sennes lay hidden until they revealed themselves in a vision in the days of Constantine, is not found in the *passio vetus*, and is not apparently recorded elsewhere.

⁶⁵ On the cemetery of Pontianus *ad Ursum pileatum*, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86 with fig. 15; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 190–1; Reekmans, 'Les cryptes des martyrs romains', pp. 298–9; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9; and M. Ricciardi, 'Pontiani coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 213–19; for the name 'ursus pileatus' ('bear with a felt cap'), see S. Serra, 'Ursus pileatus', *LTUR V*, pp. 96–7.

⁶⁶ This account of Sixtus (his Greek origins, his career as a philosopher, etc.) is lifted from the *passio vetus* (VI.2).

co-soldiers, do not be afraid: all saints, however great the tortures they suffer, are sure to receive the reward of eternal life. For our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for our salvation, so that He could leave an example for us.' And in a clear voice he said, 'Come, let no one fear terrors.' Felicissimus and Agapitus, the deacons, replied and said: 'As for us, where will we go without our father?'⁶⁷

12. And Sixtus, with the two deacons, was presented at night to Decius and Valerian. And Decius Caesar said to Bishop Sixtus: 'Do you know why you were arrested and brought before us in a public assembly?' Bishop Sixtus replied: 'I know, and know very well.' Decius said: 'If, therefore, you know, see to it that everyone knows, so that you may live and your clergy may be increased.' Bishop Sixtus replied: 'Indeed I have acted, and do act, in order that my clergy be increased.' Decius said: 'Therefore sacrifice to the immortal gods, and be the leader of priests.' St Sixtus the bishop said: 'I have always offered, and do offer, as sacrifice to God the Father Almighty, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, and the Holy Ghost, a pure and unblemished offering.'⁶⁸ Decius said: 'Consider your old age, just as we advise you. And so think of yourself, and of your clergy.' St Sixtus the bishop said: 'Up till now I have always considered myself and my clergy, so that I might try to snatch and liberate them all from the abyss of eternal death.' Decius said: 'Sacrifice; for if you do not do so, you will be made an example to everyone.' Bishop Sixtus replied: 'I have told you once already: I always offer sacrifice to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son.' Decius said to his soldiers: 'Take him to the Temple of Mars,⁶⁹ and let him sacrifice to the god Mars. If he refuses to do so, lock him up in solitary confinement in the Mamertine prison.'⁷⁰ And they took him to the Temple of Mars, and forced him to foul himself with sacrifices. Then St Sixtus the bishop said: 'O wretches, who worship empty and hand-made idols which are deaf and dumb, which are of use neither to themselves

⁶⁷ Cf. John 6: 69, the words of Peter to Christ ('Respondit ergo ei Simon Petrus, Domine ad quem ibimus verba vitae aeternae habes').

⁶⁸ The wording here—*hostia pura et immaculata*—is indebted to a prayer in the Canon of the Mass ('Vnde et memores'): 'offerimus praeclarae maiestati tuae... hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam'.

⁶⁹ Given the (supposed) geographical location of the trial in the temple of Tellus, and subsequent detention in the *carcer Mamertinus*, the nearest shrine of Mars would seem to be the great temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum: Platner–Ashby, pp. 220–3; Richardson, pp. 160–2; and V. Kockel, 'Forum Augustum', *LTUR* II, pp. 289–95. However, at a later point in the present *passio recentior* (c. 17), Sixtus, Felicissimus, and Agapitus are again led to a temple of Mars, which this time is explicitly located 'outside the walls of the Appian gate' (*foras muros portae Appiae*). For this well-attested temple of Mars outside the Porta Capena, and outside the Porta Appia in the Aurelian Walls, at the first mile of the Via Appia, see Platner–Ashby, pp. 327–8; Richardson, pp. 244–5; F. Coarelli, 'Martis aedes, templum, lucus', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 44–5; and Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 50–1 [Unità Topografica 41]. There is a distinct rise, the so-called *Clivus Martis*, in the road leading to it; see Ovid, *Fasti* vi. 191–2, and Spera, *ibid.*, p. 52 [Unità Topografica 43], as well as n. 82.

⁷⁰ The *carcer Mamertinus* (called at an earlier stage the *carcer Tullianus*) was the most famous public prison in Rome; see no. X (p. 266, n. 40).

nor to others! But hear me, my sons, and free your souls from eternal punishment and do not fear these tortures; but fear those (eternal ones) and do penance, because you are sacrificing to vain idols out of ignorance.' And, scorning the orders of Decius, they led him to private custody, together with his two deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus.

13. When St Laurence, the archdeacon, heard that Bishop Sixtus had been taken into custody, he began to call out in these words:⁷¹ 'Where, O father, are you going without your son? Where, holy priest, do you hasten without your deacon? You never offer sacrifice without your minister, nor were you accustomed to do so. What was it in me that displeased you, father? Did you find me to be unworthy? Find out for certain whether you have chosen a suitable minister, to whom you committed the consecration of the Lord's blood. Do you deny the fellowship of martyrdom to him to whom you entrusted the fellowship of the communion of the sacraments? Make sure that your judgement does not falter, whilst your courage is being praised. The rejection of a disciple is a loss to the master. What is it if outstanding leaders conquer more gloriously through the struggles of their disciples than through their own? In the end Abraham offered up his son;⁷² Peter dispatched Stephen;⁷³ and so you, father, show your power through your son, and offer up him whom you taught, so that, secure in your judgement, you may arrive at your martyr's crown in excellent company.' Then Bishop Sixtus said: 'I am not deserting you, my son, nor do I abandon you; but greater struggles are reserved for you. I, as an old man, follow the course of an easier battle; a more glorious triumph over the tyrant awaits you as a young man. You will come afterwards; stop crying; after three days you, as a deacon, will follow your priest. A middle number is appropriate here. It was not your calling to conquer under a master's direction, as if your martyrdom were requiring a supporter. I leave to you my entire inheritance. Why do you require my presence? Elijah left Elisha and did not remove his miraculous power.'⁷⁴ And St Sixtus said to the blessed Laurence: 'Take all the resources of the church and its treasures, and divide them among whomever you see fit.' Then Bishop Sixtus consigned to the blessed Laurence the archdeacon all the financial resources of the Church.

14. At that time, having assumed authority, St Laurence began to look carefully throughout all regions of the city, wherever the clergy and the poor were hidden; and carrying the church's treasures with him, he distributed them to whoever was in need. He came to the Caelian Hill, where there was a certain widow, who had lived with her husband for eleven years and remained

⁷¹ The speech of St Laurence (from 'Where, O father, are you going' to 'Elijah left Elisha') has been lifted verbatim from Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum* i. 41 (PL XVI, cols. 90–1).

⁷² Abraham and Isaac: Gen. 22: 1–18.

⁷³ It is possible that the author absent-mindedly wrote 'Peter' for 'Paul', for it was Paul who was present at the stoning of Stephen, and explicitly approved it (Acts 7: 58–60), not Peter.

⁷⁴ IV Kgs. (II Kgs.) 2: 2.

a widow for thirty-two; she had hidden many Christians in her house, both priests and clerics. When St Laurence heard this, he took clothing and treasures and came to her at night. Then, on his arrival, he discovered a multitude of Christians in the house of Cyriaca the widow, and began to wash the feet of all the Christians. And that very night Cyriaca came to the feet of St Laurence, saying to him: 'I beg you in Christ, that you place your hands on my head, because I suffer from many pains in the head.' Then St Laurence said: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God Almighty, I place my hand on your head.' And having made the sign of Christ, he placed his hand on the head of Cyriaca the widow: he also placed on her head a linen cloth, with which he used to wipe the feet of Christians; and she was cured of her illness.

15. That same night he set out from there, and began to look wherever Christians were assembled, either in houses or in catacombs. He came into the *Vicus Canarius*,⁷⁵ and found many Christians gathered in the house of a certain Narcissus, a Christian. He entered there in tears, and washed the feet of them all, and gave them presents from his treasures, which St Sixtus had given him and ordered him to disburse. And he found in that same house a blind man, named Crescentio;⁷⁶ he began to beseech him with tears, saying: 'Place your hand on my eyes, so that I may see your face.' Then St Laurence, with tears dripping from his eyes, said: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who opened the eyes of a man born blind,⁷⁷ will open your eyes.' And when he had made the sign of Christ over his eyes, they opened that same hour, and he saw the light and the blessed Laurence, just as he had requested.

16. Coming away from there, he heard that many Christians were assembled at the *Vicus Patricius*⁷⁸ in the crypt of Nepotianus;⁷⁹ and arriving there,

⁷⁵ On the *Vicus Canarius*, see Platner–Ashby, p. 571; Richardson, p. 421; and S. Serra, 'Vicus Canarius', *LTUR* V, p. 155. According to the (much later) *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, it was located in the vicinity of the church of S. Giorgio in Velabro, in the area between the Palatine and the Forum Boarium (Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, II, p. 615: 'Vicus Canarius ad S. Georgium, ubi fuit domus Lucilii: est ubi velum aureum'). The *Vicus Canarius* is also mentioned as a place where Christians congregate secretly in the *passio* of SS. Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX.2).

⁷⁶ For Crescentio, see the entry for 4 August in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, on the Via Tiburtina in the cemetery of St Laurence the martyr, Crescentio, and Justinus' (Appendix III, p. 655). The combination of Crescentio with Justinus, who is mentioned in the next chapter (c. 16), suggests that the present *passio* was the source of the entry in *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.

⁷⁷ John 9: 1–33.

⁷⁸ On the *Vicus Patricius*, see S. Serra, 'Vicus Patricius', *LTUR* V, p. 183, and G. De Spirito, 'Vicus Patricius (fonti medievali)', *LTUR* V, p. 183. The *Vicus Patricius* corresponds to the modern Via Urbana; it also figures importantly in the *passio* of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV.1 and 8).

⁷⁹ On the *crypta Nepotiana*, see G. De Spirito, 'Crypta Nepotiana', *LTUR* I, p. 329. The word *crypta* cannot mean 'tomb' in this context, for from the very earliest times burial of the dead was not permitted within the Roman city limits (see Table X of the *Twelve Tables*, as preserved in Cicero, *De legibus* ii. 58: 'hominem mortuum . . . in urbe ne sepelito neve urito', with discussion

St Laurence brought with him those things that were necessary for the holy assembly. And he found there some sixty-three persons of both sexes, and he went in to them in tears, giving the blessing of peace to all of them. And he discovered there a priest named Justinus, who had been ordained by St Sixtus, and threw himself at his feet, and they both began to roll about on the pavement, and kiss each other's feet in turn. St Laurence said to the blessed Justinus: 'Fulfil my prayer, that the feet of the Christians, and also your own, be washed by my hands.' Justinus the priest said: 'This is the Lord's commandment: may the will of our Lord Jesus Christ be done.'⁸⁰ And setting out a basin, he poured water into it and washed the feet of all the Christians. Coming to Justinus, he began first to kiss his feet and then to wash them. And when he had washed everyone's feet, he commended himself to the blessed Justinus.

17. And departing from there at that same hour, the blessed Sixtus was led to the temple of Tellus, and the deacons, Felicissimus and Agapitus, with him. And Decius was sitting in judgement, and Valerian with him. Filled with anger, Decius said to St Sixtus, the bishop: 'We take into consideration your old age: consider yourself and your clergy, so that you may live and your clergy may be increased.' St Sixtus replied: 'You wretch, you consider yourself, and do not blaspheme; but rather do penance for the blood of the saints which you have spilled.' Decius, in a rage, said to Valerian: 'If this one is not exterminated, there will be no terror (in the rest of them).' Valerian replied: 'Let him be punished with decapitation.' Felicissimus and Agapitus replied and said: 'O wretches, if only you would listen to the warnings of our father, you could avoid the eternal punishments which are to torture you.' Valerian the prefect said: 'Why do these people, who promise torture to us, continue to live? Let them be taken to the Temple of Mars in order that they offer sacrifice.'⁸¹ If they do not wish to sacrifice, let them be beheaded on the spot.' And when they were led outside the walls at the Appian Gate, St Sixtus began to say: 'See the vain and mute and deaf stone idols to which these wretches bow down, in order for them to lose eternal life.' And he said to the Temple of Mars: 'May

by Robinson, 'The Roman Law on Burials', pp. 176–7); rather, it must refer to an underground oratory, what in modern parlance would be called a basement. It is also mentioned in the *passio* of Pope Stephen (XXVI.2). The precise location is unknown; De Spirito suggests that it should be located somewhere on the *Vicus Patricius*, and is perhaps to be identified with the church of S. Lorenzo in Fonte (on which see Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 152–8, and E. Follieri, 'Antiche chiese romane nella *passio* greca di Sisto, Lorenzo ed Ippolito', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 17–19 (1980–2), 43–71, at 61–2).

⁸⁰ Alluding to the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6: 9–13: 'fiat voluntas tua').

⁸¹ On this present temple of Mars, which is explicitly said to lie on the Via Appia, and which is therefore probably distinct from the temple of Mars (Ultor) referred to in c. 12 (see n. 69), see Platner–Ashby, pp. 327–8; Richardson, pp. 244–5; and esp. F. Coarelli, 'Martis aedes, templum, lucus', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 44–5, and Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 50–1 [Unità Topografica 41].

Christ, the Son of the living God, destroy you!’ And when St Sixtus had said this, all the Christians replied ‘Amen’. And suddenly a part of the temple collapsed in ruins.

18. Then St Laurence began to cry out: ‘Do not leave me, holy father, because I have now given away all the treasures which You entrusted to me.’ Then, when the soldiers heard about the treasures, they arrested St Laurence, the archdeacon; but they led St Sixtus, the bishop, and Felicissimus and Agapitus, the deacons, to the Hill of Mars in front of the temple,⁸² and there he was beheaded with his two deacons, and they threw their bodies into the civic square, on 6 August. At night clerics and priests and deacons and a great assembly of Christians recovered their bodies and buried St Sixtus, the bishop and martyr, in a crypt in the cemetery of Callistus, on the same road [Via Appia];⁸³ but they buried SS Felicissimus and Agapitus, deacons and martyrs, in the cemetery of Praetextatus (also on the Via Appia), on 6 August.⁸⁴

19. Then the soldiers arrested St Laurence and led him away and handed him over to Parthenius the tribune. In that same hour Parthenius the tribune announced to Decius that Laurence, the archdeacon of Sixtus, who had hidden treasures, was being held in custody. Decius was overjoyed and had Laurence brought into his presence. Decius Caesar addressed him, saying: ‘Where are the treasures of the Church, which I know you have hidden about you?’ St Laurence did not speak a word to him. On that same day Decius handed him over to Valerian the prefect, saying: ‘Look carefully for the treasures of the Church, and let him sacrifice; if he will not sacrifice, kill him with various tortures.’ Then Valerian gave him to a certain deputy (*uicarius*), named Hippolytus,⁸⁵ who locked him up with many others.

⁸² For this ‘Hill of Mars’ (*Clivus Martis*) at the first mile of the Via Appia, see L. Spera, ‘Martis Clivus’, *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 45–7, and *eadem*, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 52 [Unità Topografica 43]. Mention of the ‘Hill of Mars’ is taken over from the *passio vetus* (VI.4).

⁸³ Pope Sixtus II was buried in the famous ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus; see Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, pp. 20–2 and 73–90, esp. 78–83; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–200; Styger, *Martyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 77–83; Testini, *Le catacombe*, pp. 128–35; *idem*, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 209–12 with figs. 58–60; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 49–67; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196–8; L. Spera, ‘Cal(l)isti Coemeterium (Via Appia)’, *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 32–44, at 38; Flocchi Nicolai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, pp. 16–17; and Flocchi Nicolai and Guyon, ‘Relire Styger’, esp. pp. 133–52, with figs. 5–15.

⁸⁴ See the entry for 6 August in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: ‘Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the death of Pope Sixtus the martyr. <Likewise in the cemetery> of Praetextatus, Felicissimus <and> Agapitus’ (Appendix III, p. 655). On the cemetery of Praetextatus, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 282–99; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 214–16; Tolotti, ‘Ricerca dei luoghi venerati’; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–92; Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*; *eadem*, ‘Praetextati coemeterium’, *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 250–61; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–84, with discussion of SS. Felicissimus and Agapitus at pp. 178–9.

⁸⁵ In the *passio vetus*, Hippolytus was conceived as a military commander or general (*dux*); here his status has been altered to become that of a ‘deputy’ (*uicarius*). In the context of the

20. There was a man in prison (who had been) there a long time, a pagan, who by crying out his eyes had become blind. St Laurence said to him: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, and be baptized, and He will restore your sight.' Lucillus replied, and said: 'I always wanted to be baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ'. St Laurence said: '(Only) if you believe with all your heart.' Lucillus replied, weeping: 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and I reject vain idols.' Hippolytus was listening patiently to their conversation. Then St Laurence catechized Lucillus and, taking up some water,⁸⁶ said: 'All things are washed clean in confession. You, when I tell you to, reply: 'I believe'. And he blessed the water; and when he had stripped him, he poured it over his head, saying: 'Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Lucillus?' And he replied: 'I believe'. 'And in Jesus Christ His Son, Who suffered under Pontius Pilate?' And he replied: 'I believe'. 'He Who died and was resurrected and ascended into heaven, whence He is to come to judge the living and the dead and all the world in flames? He will illuminate you in body and in soul.' And he replied in tears, 'I believe'.⁸⁷ And straightway he baptized him and covered him with a linen cloth. Then his eyes were opened, and he began to shout out, saying: 'Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal God, Who restored my sight through St Laurence, because I was formerly blind and now I can see.' On hearing this, many blind persons came to St Laurence in tears. And St Laurence, detained in the custody of Hippolytus, placed his hands over the eyes of the blind people and they were restored to sight.

21. Seeing this, Hippolytus said to St Laurence: 'Show me the treasures of the Church.' St Laurence said to him: 'O Hippolytus, if you believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, I will show you the treasures and promise you eternal life.' Hippolytus says to him: 'If you match deeds to words, I shall do the things you are urging.' St Laurence says to him: 'Listen to me, and do quickly the things which I ask, because idols are dumb and deaf and empty: but you (should be) baptized.' And he catechized him in the normal way. And drawing up some of the water, Hippolytus began to say: 'I saw the happy souls of the innocent rejoicing.' And he said to St Laurence, with tears (in his eyes): 'I beseech you, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that all

imperial government at Rome, the title 'deputy' would in the first instance imply the deputy of the praetorian prefect, with jurisdiction over the suburbicarian diocese of Italy. But in c. 30, the author stresses the military duties of Hippolytus, which implies that he is not being conceived as the 'deputy' to the praetorian prefect (whose role was purely judicial), but as that of a military adjutant, as the word is used in the *Codex Justinianus* xii. 51. 9.

⁸⁶ It has been pointed out by Brandt (*Passiones e battisteri*, p. 111) that the reference to water being brought (*allata aqua*) implies the presence of a nearby baptistery; for another example, see no. XX (p. 401, n. 55).

⁸⁷ This (fairly detailed) set of baptismal questions is not discussed by Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen'.

my household be baptized.' And nineteen persons of both sexes in the household of Hippolytus were baptized in glory. Then Valerian sent orders to Hippolytus: 'Bring Laurence to the palace.' Hippolytus said to St Laurence: 'Valerian, following the orders of Decius, has commanded that I bring you to him.' St Laurence said: 'Let us walk together, because glory is being prepared for you and me.' And when they had both come into the presence of Valerian, Valerian said to St Laurence: 'Abandon now your mental recalcitrance and answer concerning the treasures, which we know you to have hidden, which you spoke about.' St Laurence said: 'Give me two or three days' adjournment, and I will present the treasures to you.' Valerian replied and said to Hippolytus: 'Let him have three days' adjournment on your cognizance.'

22. From that day onwards (Laurence) assembled all the blind, lame, weak, and poor and hid them in the house of Hippolytus.⁸⁸ Valerian announced to Decius that Laurence, having been granted an adjournment of three days, had promised to reveal his treasures. After three days he presented himself in the Sallustian palace.⁸⁹ And Decius Caesar said, in the presence of Valerian the prefect: 'Where are the treasures, which you promised to reveal?' St Laurence, having assembled the multitudes, led the poor wretches into the palace; and he said in a clear voice: 'Behold these, the eternal treasures, who never decrease and always increase, who are scattered in individual places and are found everywhere.' Valerian, the prefect, said, in the presence of Decius Caesar: 'Why do you change your story? Sacrifice to the gods and forget this magic in which you place your faith.' St Laurence said: 'Why does the devil compel you to say to the Christians, "Sacrifice to demons"? Whether it is right that we should prostrate ourselves more to demons than to God, the Creator of things visible and invisible, you decide: who should be worshipped, he who was created or He Who created?' Decius Caesar said: 'Who is created or Who created?' St Laurence said: 'God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Creator of all creation, of men and birds and flocks and beasts and draught animals and fish and heaven and earth. And you say: sacrifice to stones and worship deaf and dumb creations!'

⁸⁸ Since the 'house of Hippolytus' is conceived as lying in the vicinity of the *thermae Olympiadis* and the 'Sallustian Palace', it is probably to be located in the vicinity of the present-day Piazza Fiume and the Baths of Diocletian; see G. De Spirito, 'Domus Hippolyti', *LTUR* II, pp. 114–15.

⁸⁹ The existence of a 'palace of Sallust' is recorded only in the present *passio recentior*. To judge from the context in which it is mentioned, it seems to have been located very near to the 'palace of Tiberius' (see n. 92), such that the two palaces formed part of a huge imperial residential complex. This residential complex was almost certainly located in the 'Gardens of Sallust', one of the largest imperial estates within the City walls, lying between the Quirinal and the Pincio; they were bounded by the Via Salaria Nuova on the east, the Aurelian Walls on the north, the brow of the Quirinal on the south, and perhaps the (present-day) Via Bissolati on the west (see Richardson, pp. 202–3, and P. Innocenti and M. C. Leotta, 'Horti Sallustiani', *LTUR* III, pp. 79–81). The residential complex remains to be fully revealed by archaeology.

23. Decius Caesar, enraged, commanded that he be stripped in his presence and beaten with scorpion-whips,⁹⁰ while Decius himself shouted out: 'Do not blaspheme the gods!' While these tortures were going on, St Laurence was saying: 'I truly give thanks to my God, Who has deigned to join me to His servants. You wretch, (Decius), you are tortured in your madness and your fury.' Decius Caesar said: 'Raise him up from the ground and place every type of torture instrument before his gaze.' And steel plates and racks and lead-weighted whips and 'thistles'⁹¹ were brought. And Decius Caesar said to him: 'Sacrifice to the gods; for all this array of tortures will be applied to your body.' St Laurence said, 'You poor wretch, I have always desired these delights; for these tortures will be eternal for you, but will be for our glory.' Decius Caesar said: 'And so if this is glory for you, tell me where other irreligious persons like you are hidden, so that you might all feast together.' St Laurence replied: 'Those whom you ask after have already given their names in heaven. You are not even worthy to be introduced into their presence.'

24. Then Decius Caesar had St Laurence, bound in chains, brought into the palace of Tiberius,⁹² and ordered him to be tried for what he had done. And he ordered a tribunal to be prepared for him in the basilica of Jupiter.⁹³ When he had entered and was seated, he ordered that St Laurence be presented to him. He addressed him thus: 'Reveal to us all irreligious persons, so that the city may be purified; and as for you yourself, sacrifice to the gods and do not trust in the treasures which you have hidden.' St Laurence said: 'Truly I both trust and am confident in my treasures.' Decius Caesar said: 'Do you think you can

⁹⁰ A 'scorpion-whip' (*scorpio*) is explained by Isidore as being 'knotty' and 'thorny' (in distinction to a slender *virga*, 'switch'), and is so-called because it inflicts a curved wound on the body: 'si certe nodosa vel aculeata, scorpio rectissimo nomine, quia arcuato vulnere in corpus infigitur' (*Etym.* v. 27. 18); cf. Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 87–8.

⁹¹ The mention of an instrument of torture called a 'thistle' (*carduus*) is taken over from the *passio vetus* (VI.8); cf. also c. 30. No such instrument is described in Isidore or in Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*; possibly the 'thistle' was some form of *uncus* ('hook'), a well-attested instrument with which torturers raked the flesh of criminals (Gallonio, *ibid.* pp. 110–12). For the 'thistle', cf. *TLL* III, col. 448, lines 31–3, s.v. 'carduus', which cites the *Passio SS. apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, c. 58, where Nero gives the command, 'et ideo cardis ferreis acceptis iubeo eos in Naumachia consumi' (ed. Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, I, p. 169).

⁹² The 'palace of Tiberius' (*palatium Tiberii*) formed part of a vast imperial residential complex, which also included the 'palace of Sallust' (see n. 89) and the baths of Olympias (see n. 97); this complex was located within the 'Gardens of Sallust', one of the largest imperial estates lying within the City walls; see G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Tiberii, Thyberi / Tiberianum, Tyberianum', *LTUR* IV, pp. 49–50. The 'palace of Tiberius' is not, therefore, to be identified with the *Domus Tiberiana* on the Palatine (which lies beneath the present Farnese Gardens).

⁹³ The basilica of Jupiter (*basilica Iovis*) was apparently in the close vicinity of the imperial residential complex, which included the palace of Tiberius, in which the trial of St Laurence was being conducted; see G. De Spirito, 'Iuppiter, templum ad sanctum Quiricum', *LTUR* III, p. 130, who suggests that the basilica of Jupiter might be identical with the *templum idolorum* in the area of the baths of Diocletian and the Piazza Fiume (on which see G. De Spirito, 'Idola, templum', *LTUR* III, p. 95).

be freed or pardoned from torture through these treasures?’ Laurence said: ‘I, as a servant of Christ, am confident in my heavenly treasures.’ Decius, filled with rage, ordered him to be stripped and beaten with staves. St Laurence, while he was being beaten, was calling out to Decius, saying: ‘Look, you wretch: at least recognize that I triumph through the treasures of Christ and do not feel your tortures.’ Decius Caesar said: ‘Increase the staves, and place red-hot iron plates on his sides.’ St Laurence said in that hour: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, God (born) of God, have mercy on Your servant, because when charged I did not deny (You), and under interrogation I confessed You as Lord.’ Decius Caesar ordered him to be raised up from the ground, and said to him: ‘I see the workings of magic in you; I know that you make sport of the tortures through magic. But you don’t make sport of me: I testify before the gods and goddesses that either you will sacrifice or else I will execute you with various punishments.’ St Laurence said: ‘In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I do not fear your punishments, which are of the here-and-now; do what you are doing, do not stop.’ Decius, seized with extreme rage, ordered him to be beaten at length with lead-weighted whips.

25. St Laurence said: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Who deigned to take on the shape of a servant for our salvation, so that You could free us from servitude to demons, receive my soul.’ At that same hour a voice was heard, and Decius too heard it: ‘Many struggles are still due to you.’ Then Decius, enraged, said in a clear voice: ‘Romans, assembly of the republic: do you hear the consolations offered by demons to this impious wretch, who fears neither gods nor emperors, and is not afraid of select tortures?’ And Decius Caesar said again, ‘Stretch him out, and assail him with scorpion-whips.’ St Laurence, stretched out on the scaffold, said, smiling and giving thanks: ‘Blessed are You, Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who granted us a mercy which we have not deserved. But, Lord, grant us Your grace, on account of Your mercy, so that all those present may recognize that You console Your servants.’

26. In that same hour one of the soldiers, named Romanus, began to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ through the words of St Laurence, and he began to say to Laurence: ‘I see a handsome man with a linen cloth standing next to you and wiping your limbs. For this reason I implore you through Christ, Who sent to you His angel, not to abandon me.’ Then Decius, filled with rage and guile, said to Valerian: ‘We are defeated by magic.’ And he ordered Laurence to be released from the scaffold and raised up. At that same hour Romanus, bringing a pitcher with water, sought to find a time when he could offer it to St Laurence. Then Decius began to burn with rage, and ordered that he be handed back to Hippolytus there in the palace. When Romanus arrived, bringing the water, he threw himself at the feet of St Laurence and asked him in tears that he be baptized. And taking up the water, he blessed and baptized him. Hearing about this, Decius said: ‘Soften him up with staves.’ And when he [Romanus] was brought into the presence of Decius Caesar, he

began to shout out in a loud voice, without having been asked, saying: 'I am a Christian'. And Decius Caesar ordered that he undergo capital punishment that same hour. And having been led outside the walls at the Porta Salaria,⁹⁴ he was beheaded there on 9 August.⁹⁵ Then Justinus the priest came at night and recovered his body and buried it in a crypt in the *Ager Veranus*.⁹⁶

27. On that same night Decius Caesar, together with Valerian his prefect, ordered that a tribunal be prepared for him in the Baths of Olympias,⁹⁷ and he went at night to the Baths near the palace of Sallust,⁹⁸ and ordered that St Laurence be brought to him. Then Hippolytus began to be sad and to cry. St Laurence spoke to him thus: 'Do not weep, but rather rejoice and be silent, because I am going to the glory of God'. Hippolytus said to him: 'Why do I not shout out that I am a Christian, and thus lie down with you?' St Laurence said to him: 'I rather hide Christ in hidden places in the interior man. And afterwards, when I have shouted out, listen and come.' And when he had said these things, Decius Caesar ordered that every kind of torture instrument be brought before the tribunal—lead-weighted whips, staves, steel plates, (iron) beds, fire-pans—and he took his seat in the Baths for his tribunal. St Laurence was brought by night before Decius Caesar and Valerian the prefect. Decius said to him: 'Abandon the perfidy of magic and tell us your noble ancestry.' St Laurence said, 'Concerning my family, I am Spanish, but trained and brought up in Rome, and from my infancy trained as a Christian in holy and divine law.' Decius Caesar said: 'It is truly divine, because you neither fear the gods nor shrink from tortures.' St Laurence said: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I do not fear, nor shrink from, your tortures.' Decius Caesar said: 'Sacrifice to the gods. For this night will be spent on you in tortures.' St Laurence said: 'My night has no darkness, but all things grow bright in the light.' Then he ordered that his mouth be smashed with stones:

⁹⁴ On the Porta Salaria, a gate with two semicircular towers in the Aurelian walls by which the Via Salaria left the City, see Platner–Ashby, p. 416; Richardson, pp. 308–9 with fig. 72; and G. Pisani Sartorio, 'Porta Salaria', *LTUR* III, p. 311. It was badly damaged by cannon fire in 1870, and finally demolished in 1921.

⁹⁵ In spite of the fact that St Romanus is said to have been beheaded outside the Porta Salaria (hence on the Via Salaria), the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* records his burial against 9 August on the Via Tiburtina: '<Rome, on the Via> Tiburtina, Romanus' (Appendix III, p. 655).

⁹⁶ The *Ager Veranus*, located outside the City walls on the Via Tiburtina, was the name used in late antiquity for the area occupied by the cemetery of St Cyriaca, also known by the more familiar name of St Laurence: see the entry for Pope Sixtus II in the *Liber pontificalis*, which records the burial of St Laurence in *cimiterio Cyriaces, in agrum Veranum* (ed. Mommsen, p. 35; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 155; trans. Davis, p. 11); see Platner–Ashby, p. 3, and Richardson, p. 4.

⁹⁷ The Baths of Olympias (*thermae Olympiadis*), which are mentioned uniquely here, were evidently located in the near vicinity of the palace of Sallust, that is, within the imperial residential complex sited within the vast 'Gardens of Sallust' (*Horti Sallustiani*: n. 89); see G. De Spirito, 'Thermae Olympiadis', *LTUR* V, pp. 62–3.

⁹⁸ For the palace of Sallust, see n. 89.

Laurence, smiling, was consoled and said: 'I give thanks to You, Lord God, because You are the God of all things.'

28. Decius Caesar said: 'Bring the iron bed, so that the impudent Laurence may rest.' A bed with three ribs, in the shape of a grate, was brought into the presence of Decius Caesar. And St Laurence was brought in and stripped of his clothing in the sight of Decius and Valerian, and stretched out on the iron grate. And fire-pans with burning coals were brought, and they placed them under the iron grate, and with iron forks they prodded St Laurence; and Decius Caesar said: 'Sacrifice to the gods.' St Laurence replied: 'I offered myself as a sacrifice to God "in the odour of sweetness",⁹⁹ for "a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit".¹⁰⁰ The executioners were energetically bringing burning coals, and putting them beneath the iron grate, and pressing them down with their iron forks. St Laurence said: 'Learn, wretch, that your coals offer me refreshment; for you they will be an eternal punishment. Because God Himself knows that when accused I did not deny Him, and when questioned I confessed Christ: having been broiled I give thanks'. Valerian the prefect said: 'Where are the fires which you have promised to the gods?' In that same hour St Laurence was saying, 'O your foolishness! Wretches, do you not realize that your burning coals provide not heat but cool refreshment?' And all those who were present began to marvel at how Decius had ordered him to be roasted alive. St Laurence said with a calm face: 'I give thanks to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to comfort me.' And raising his eyes up to Decius, St Laurence spoke as follows: 'See, you wretch, you have roasted one part; turn over the other and eat.' Then giving thanks to God he said with praise: 'I thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that I have been found worthy to enter Your portals.' And he immediately gave up the ghost.

29. That same night, Decius, together with Valerian, walked away from there to the Tiberian Palace,¹⁰¹ having left the body on the grate. The following day, at first light, Hippolytus seized his body and buried it with linen and spices from his own resources. And he reported this fact to Justinus the priest, how the body of St Laurence had given up the ghost while on the burning coals, and how Decius Caesar and Valerian had departed in confusion and reconvened in the palace of Tiberius, and how the cruel men had thus abandoned the holy body on the grate over the coals. Then Justinus the priest and Hippolytus, weeping and greatly saddened, took the body of St Laurence,

⁹⁹ The phrase *odor suavitatis* recurs frequently in descriptions of sacrifices in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 8: 21, Exod. 29: 41, Lev. 2: 9 and 12, 8: 28, etc.).

¹⁰⁰ Ps. 50: 19 ('sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus').

¹⁰¹ The fact that Decius and Valerian can be represented as walking from the palace of Sallust (with the baths of Olympias) to the palace of Tiberius, implies that the two palaces were adjacent parts of the imperial residential complex; by the same token, it disproves the suspicion that the palace of Tiberius is to be identified with the *domus Tiberiana* on the Palatine, which is not within convenient walking distance of the palace of Sallust (see n. 89).

the archdeacon and martyr, and came to the Via Tiburtina, to the estate of a widowed matron named Cyriaca,¹⁰² to whom the blessed martyr had come at night; the saint had given her a linen cloth, with which he had himself wiped the feet of the Christians. And they placed him there until dusk, having first cleaned up the body. Then at the time of vespers they buried him in the Via Tiburtina, on the property of the widow Cyriaca, on the *Ager Veranus*, on 10 August; and they fasted, keeping vigil by night, for three days, together with a multitude of Christians; and they did not cease from the wailing of tears. St Justinus the priest offered the 'sacrifice of praise' [i.e. mass] and they all participated.

30. Hippolytus, returning after three days, came to his house and gave the blessing of peace to everyone there, even to his servants and slaves; and he reported concerning the sacrifice at the altar of St Laurence the martyr. And after he had set up a table, before he could take sustenance, soldiers came and arrested him and led him to Decius Caesar. Seeing him, Decius Caesar said with a smile, 'Have you too become a magician?—because you are said to have taken away the body of St Laurence.' Hippolytus replied: 'I did this not as a magician, but as a Christian.' Hearing this Decius Caesar, seized with rage, ordered that his mouth be smashed with stones, and stripped him of the clothing in which he was dressed in the manner of Christians, and said to him: 'Sacrifice to the gods and consent to our orders and live and enjoy the prize of military advancement.'¹⁰³ Hippolytus said: 'You have not stripped me, but rather you begin to clothe me.' Decius Caesar said: 'Are you not a worshipper of the gods? How have you become so foolish that you do not even blush at your nakedness?' Hippolytus said: 'I am in my right mind and have become a Christian, because in my ignorance I did the things you believe in.' Decius Caesar said: 'Sacrifice and live, or else you will perish through torture, as Laurence did.' Hippolytus said: 'Would that I might deserve to follow the example of St Laurence the martyr, whom you, wretch, have dared to name with your filthy mouth.' Decius Caesar said: 'Stretch him out and beat him with staves.' And when he had been beaten at length, he said: 'I give thanks to my God.' Decius said: 'Hippolytus scorns staves; beat him with "thistles".'¹⁰⁴ And they exhausted themselves beating him. But Hippolytus was crying out in a loud voice, 'I am a Christian'. Decius Caesar said: 'Raise him up from the

¹⁰² For this property of Cyriaca (located on the *Ager Veranus*), on the Via Tiburtina, on which the cemetery in her name (or in that of St Laurence) was founded, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 338–54; P. Guidi, 'Coemeterium Cyriacae o Coemeterium S. Laurentii', *RACr* 26 (1950), 147–80; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 240–1; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 148–51; S. Serra, 'Cyriaces Coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 176–80, with fig. 176; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 93–8.

¹⁰³ This statement ('et frueri militiae palma') is meaningless if, as was stated in c. 19, Hippolytus was already a 'deputy' (*uicarius*). But the emphasis here, and later in the chapter, on the military duties of Hippolytus, implies that the author was using the term *uicarius* in a non-technical sense; see n. 85.

¹⁰⁴ On the *carduus* as an instrument of torture, see n. 91.

ground.’ And when he had been raised up, he ordered him to be dressed in the military uniform which he had worn when he had previously been a pagan. And Decius said to Hippolytus: ‘Recall your military duty and be our friend, and in my presence perform your former military obligations, which you once had.’ Then Hippolytus says in a clear voice: ‘This military duty of mine is to visit infirm Christians; whence I seek to come swiftly to the palm with its attendant fruit.’

31. Decius Caesar, filled with rage, said to Valerian, the prefect: ‘Take all his property and execute him under savage interrogation.’ On that same day Valerian the prefect, having requisitioned all his property, discovered in the house of Hippolytus an entirely Christian household. Acting as judge, he had all of them brought into his presence. There was there with her husband the nurse of St Hippolytus, named Concordia, a Christian woman. Valerian the prefect said to them, in the presence of Decius and Hippolytus: ‘Think of your age, so that you do not perish at the same time as Hippolytus your master.’ Concordia replied and said: ‘We prefer to die chastely with our master rather than to live shamefully.’ Valerian the prefect said: ‘The nature of slaves is not corrected except with beatings.’ And he ordered that Concordia be beaten with lead-weighted whips. And while she was being beaten she gave up the ghost, in the presence of Hippolytus. Then Hippolytus began to say, rejoicing: ‘I give thanks to You, O Lord, Who have sent forward my nurse before the sight of Your saints.’ Valerian the prefect said to Hippolytus: ‘Do you still trust in magic and refuse to honour the gods, nor follow the orders of our emperors?’ And, enraged, he ordered him to be led outside the walls at the Porta Tiburtina,¹⁰⁵ with his entire household. And Hippolytus began to comfort them all, saying: ‘My brothers, do not fear, because I and you have one Lord.’ But Valerian ordered that the entire household be beheaded in the presence of Hippolytus. And nineteen persons of either sex were beheaded in glory. He ordered that the feet of St Hippolytus to be tied to the necks of untamed horses, and for him thus to be dragged through a thicket of thistles and thorns.¹⁰⁶ While he was being dragged he gave up the ghost. In that same hour they abandoned his body near the fountain at the edge of the *Ager Veranus*, on 13 August.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ For the Porta Tiburtina, the gate in the Aurelian walls by which the Via Tiburtina left the City, see Platner–Ashby, p. 417; I. A. Richmond, *The City Wall of Imperial Rome* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 170–81; Richardson, pp. 309–10; and G. Pisani Sartorio, ‘Porta Tiburtina’, *LTUR* III, pp. 312–13.

¹⁰⁶ The execution of Hippolytus by being dragged through a thicket of thistles by wild horses is taken over from the *passio vetus* (VI.8, p. 193 with n. 62).

¹⁰⁷ The *Depositio martyrum* records the burial of Hippolytus on 13 August (see Appendix I, p. 635); cf. the entry against the same date in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: ‘Rome, on the Via Tiburtina, Hippolytus the martyr’ (Appendix III, p. 656).

32. That same night, Justinus the priest came and recovered the body, and buried it in the same place. Then Justinus the priest began over many days to look diligently for the body of the blessed martyr Concordia; and when he could not find it, he grew sad, and tears did not cease to fall from his eyes. On the thirteenth day after the martyrdom of Hippolytus, a certain soldier named Porphyrius came to a certain sewer attendant, anticipating that the blessed Concordia would have had gold or jewels in her clothing; and he said to the sewer attendant, 'If you can keep a secret, I will reveal to you what is much sought after by people of your trade.' The sewer attendant said to Porphyrius: 'The secret will remain in my heart; just tell me the truth.' And he said to him: 'Some days ago Valerian the prefect commanded that a certain woman, a trustee of Hippolytus the Christian, be beaten to death with lead-weighted whips. When she was dead, he ordered that her body be thrown into the sewer. And I suspect that this woman had pearls or gold hidden among her clothing.' The sewer attendant was trustworthy, and was secretly a Christian. That same day the sewer attendant said (to the soldier): 'Therefore show me the place, and I will look for her at night; when I find her, I'll tell you.' And the name of the sewer attendant was Irenaeus. He came to Justinus the priest and told him everything which had been said to him by Porphyrius. The blessed Justinus the priest, giving thanks to Almighty God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, said with tears, on bended knees, 'Let us go at night, my son, to the sewer.' Irenaeus said in reply, 'Allow me first to go to Porphyrius.' The blessed Justinus the priest said to Irenaeus, 'See to it, my son, that you keep the sacred mission entrusted to you.' And Irenaeus went to Porphyrius. And Porphyrius showed him the place. But Irenaeus came with him at night and found the uncontaminated body, and, looking in her clothing, found nothing. That same night, Porphyrius fled. But Irenaeus called to him a certain Christian named Abundius, and they took up the body of the blessed Concordia and brought it to the blessed Justinus. On receiving it, he gave thanks to God and buried it next to the bodies of Hippolytus and the other saints. The next day Valerian the prefect, having heard about this, arrested Irenaeus and Abundius, and ordered that they be murdered in the sewer. They were killed on 26 August. Then the blessed Justinus the priest raised up their bodies and buried them next to the body of St Laurence in the crypt in the *ager Veranus*.

33. On the twenty-eighth day following the deaths of the aforementioned martyrs, Decius Caesar ordered that a spectacle be mounted in the amphitheatre, with him sitting in a golden coach, together with Valerian the prefect. When he had stepped down from the coach and entered the amphitheatre, and had provided many martyrs for the cruel spectacle, Decius Caesar was seized by a demon, and shouted out, 'O Hippolytus, you are leading me away captive, as if bound by heavy chains!' And Valerian shouted out, 'O Laurence, you are dragging me with fiery chains!' And that same hour, Valerian breathed his last, in the presence of Decius. On returning to his palace, Decius did not

cease to be troubled by the demon for three days, and he himself shouted by day and night, 'I beseech you, Laurence, stop these tortures a little!' And there was great lamentation in the palace. Then his wife, a cruel pagan named Tryphonia,¹⁰⁸ seeing Decius being troubled by the demon, ordered that all the (Christian) saints who were imprisoned were to be released. That same hour Decius died. His wife Tryphonia came to the blessed Justinus, and threw herself in tears at his feet, together with Cyrilla the daughter of Decius, asking that they be baptized. The blessed priest Justinus received them joyfully, and imposed on them a fast of seven days. And at the end of seven days he baptized them. When they had been baptized, the event was broadcast throughout the entire world. The next day, while she was praying, Tryphonia gave up the ghost; he [Justinus] buried her body in the same crypt as Hippolytus, on 18 October. That same day the blessed Justinus began actively to enquire as to where the bodies of saints might be hidden, and to offer a reward to soldiers (who revealed this). Having heard that Tryphonia, the wife of Decius, had become a Christian, as had his daughter Cyrilla, men (soldiers) numbering forty-six came with their wives to the blessed priest Justinus, and threw themselves at his feet, asking and begging that they receive baptism.

34. Then the blessed priest Justinus assembled his entire clergy, and looked for someone whom he could ordain in place of the blessed martyr, Pope Sixtus (II). And they ordained a venerable man named Dionysius;¹⁰⁹ Maximus, bishop of Ostia, ordained him.¹¹⁰ Then the blessed Justinus offered to the venerable Dionysius, bishop of Rome, the forty-six soldiers for baptism; and he baptized them in the name of the Trinity. When he heard this, King¹¹¹ Claudius,¹¹² filled with indignation, sent and arrested Cyrilla, the daughter of the emperor Decius; and he ordered that she be taken to sacrifice to the demons. They all scorned the command of the king. He ordered them to be held in custody, but ordered Cyrilla to be brought before him. He spoke to her

¹⁰⁸ This statement is pure fiction: the wife of Decius was named Herennia Etruscilla (Salisbury and Mattingly, 'The Reign of Trajan Decius', p. 16).

¹⁰⁹ Dionysius, the successor of Pope Sixtus II, was pope from 260 until 267; see the entry in the *Liber pontificalis* (ed. Mommsen, p. 36; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 157; trans. Davis, p. 11), and discussion in *EP* I, pp. 292–6 [M. Simonetti]. Dionysius was buried in the 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.

¹¹⁰ From the life of Pope Marcus in the *Liber pontificalis* we learn that the bishop of Rome was normally consecrated (as here) by the bishop of Ostia (ed. Mommsen, p. 73; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 202; trans. Davis, p. 27); cf. Augustine, *Breuiulus collationis cum Donatistis* [CPL 337] iii. 29 (PL XLIII, col. 613). For the bishopric of Ostia, see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 98–110, with discussion of this Bishop Maximus at pp. 108–9; Lanzoni notes that the existence of a bishop of this name cannot be established with certainty.

¹¹¹ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

¹¹² The emperor in question is Claudius II 'Gothicus' (268–9); see *SHA*, 'Divus Claudius', and Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 34 (trans. Bird, pp. 36–7). Claudius II is not known to have been a persecutor of Christians, and the chronology is preposterous in any event, since seventeen years elapsed between the principates of Decius and of Claudius.

thus: 'Does it please you thus to neglect to follow the commands and rites of your distinguished parentage, and to abandon royal sustenance?' Cyrilla replied: 'I am a Christian, and a handmaiden of Christ, and I abandon the demons who are leading you to eternal punishment, such that you will perish with them.' Claudius said: 'Give in to me, and sacrifice to the gods, and take a husband appropriate to your high station.' Cyrilla said, 'I have already accepted as husband the man Who taught me wisdom, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom I have been committed once for all.' Claudius, filled with rage, ordered her to be executed and killed with the sword, and for her body to be left in the open for the dogs. The blessed priest Justinus recovered her body and buried her with her mother, where he had placed the body of St Laurence, on 28 October.

35. At that same time Claudius ordered that an armed contingent of soldiers be stationed in the Sallustian Palace, and he ordered that all soldiers who had undergone baptism be presented to him; and he ordered his army to take them outside the City Walls by the Porta Salaria, to 'the town of the brickworks' (*in civitate Figlinas*)¹¹³ and to decapitate them there. All forty-six of them, not counting their wives, were decapitated for the name of Christ. At night Justinus the priest and John¹¹⁴ recovered their bodies and buried them with a multitude of Christians on the Via Salaria, at the *Clivus Cucumeris*,¹¹⁵ on 25 October, where their prayers flourish up to the present day, together with another 120 martyrs, among whom were the four soldiers Theodosius, Lucius, Marcus, and Peter. They say that, when they saw the armed soldiers coming towards them, they all asked, with the greatest intention of dying, to be the first among them to be decapitated, to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹¹³ On the location of these *figlinae* ('brickworks'), and the name *Figlinae civitas*, located somewhere between the Via Salaria Nuova and the Via Nomentana, see D. De Francesco, 'Figlinae Civitas', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, p. 251. The same place is referred to in the *passio* of St Susanna (XI.29 with n. 51), and in that of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.2), as well as in the life of Pope Silvester in the *Liber pontificalis*, which refers to 'all the land around the city of Figlina' (*omnis ager circa civitatem Figlinas*: ed. Mommsen, p. 63; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 180; cf. Davis, p. 22, who opts for the reading *Fidenae* in lieu of *Figlinas*).

¹¹⁴ A person named John who recovers and buries the bodies of martyrs also figures in the *passiones* of Pope Marcellus (XX.4), SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.3), SS. Simplicius, Faustinus and Beatrix (XXXVI.1), as well as in Recension B of the *passio* of SS. John and Paul (XVIII App. 4).

¹¹⁵ For the cemetery at 'Cucumber Hill' (*Clivus Cucumeris*) on the Via Salaria Vecchia, as known from various *passiones* of Roman martyrs, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 581–3; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 263; Carletti, 'Esplorazioni dimenticate', pp. 93–105; Giordani, 'Osservazioni sul "coemeterium ad septem palumbas"', Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 119–20; C. Carletti, 'Clivum Cucumeris (in) coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 114–18; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 32–8. The cemetery is also mentioned in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.3). In spite of intensive efforts by Roman archaeologists, its precise location has never been identified.

XVII

SS. Agnes and Emerentiana

498 × 514; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of St Agnes and the mausoleum of Constantina (Via Nomentana), and the ‘Great Cemetery’ or *Coemeterium maius* (Via Nomentana)

St Agnes, the young virgin martyr, was one of the most popular saints of Rome. Like St Sebastian and St Laurence, she was venerated in a lavish ambulatory basilica built over the cemetery in which she was buried on the Via Nomentana. The popularity of her cult, both at Rome and throughout the Christian West, is reflected in the vast circulation of the present *passio*, which is preserved in more than 450 manuscripts.¹ Unlike many of the *passiones* in the present volume, which appear to have been conjured out of thin air by their authors, there was a long tradition—both oral and written—behind the legend of St Agnes as it was inherited by the author of the present *passio*. The burial of St Agnes is commemorated against 21 January in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354. Pope Damasus (366–84) composed a metrical inscription to commemorate St Agnes, possibly on the occasion of the dedication of the basilica in her name (see below), as follows:

The story relates that her holy parent once said that
Agnes, when the trumpet had sounded a mournful note,
had suddenly left the bosom of her nurse
willingly to trample underfoot the threats and rage of the savage tyrant—
because she wished for her noble body to burn in the flames,
(thus) to overcome mighty fear with her modest strength
and to cover her naked body with her flowing hair
so that the gaze of mortals could not see the temple of God.

¹ Listed *BHL* 156 and *CPL* 2159; for discussion see Franchi de’Cavalieri, *S. Agnese*; Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 214–17; Jubaru, *Sainte Agnès*; *DACL* I/1, cols. 905–18 [P. Allard]; *BSS* I, cols. 382–407 [E. Josi]; Consolino, ‘Modelli di santità femminile’, pp. 99–101; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, pp. 85–7; H. Jones, ‘Agnes and Constantia’; Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, pp. 347–79; *eadem*, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 192–203; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 74–6.

O venerable saint, (who are) for me the sacred glory of chastity:
I ask, great martyr, that you look favourably on the prayers of Damasus.²

From this epigram we learn only that Agnes willingly left her parental home and the 'bosom of her nurse'—implying that she was still young—to undergo trial (for the *nomen Christianum*, presumably), and was condemned to be burned alive; in her modesty she covered her naked body with her loosened hair. Some years later Ambrose, bishop of Milan (d. 397) was familiar with stories concerning the martyrdom of St Agnes. He mentions her in his treatise *De virginibus ad Marcellinam* [CPL 145], composed c.377, where he states that she was martyred at the age of twelve, and that she faced the executioner without fear before being beheaded.³ The detail that she was beheaded has to be guessed, but in his hymn on St Agnes Ambrose provides more specific information (conveyed, however, allusively): that, when she was being forced to marry, she replied that virgins do not marry, because the fire (of carnal relationships) extinguishes faith; so she asks the executioner to 'strike here, so that I may put out the fire with my blood' (st. 6). When struck by the sword, she modestly covers her body so no one would see her naked (st. 7), whereupon she fell modestly to the earth (st. 8).⁴ At the very turn of the fourth century (c.400), Prudentius devoted a poem to St Agnes as part of his *Liber peristephanon* (no. xiv).⁵ In Prudentius' poem, Agnes is described as a young girl (no age specified) who was a devout Christian, as a result of which she was brought before a judge and forced to sacrifice; she refused to do so, and the judge sentenced her to be placed in a public brothel (25: *lupanar publicum*). When she was exhibited (naked, presumably) in a public square, no one dared to gaze at her, except for one impudent young man, who was blinded by a lightning bolt (46–7). Prudentius adds that 'some people say' (*rettulerint*) that by her prayers Agnes was able to restore the young man's sight (57–60). The orders were given for her to be killed by the sword; with one stroke the executioner struck off her head (89: *uno sub ictu*).

It is clear from this various evidence that the author of the present *passio*, writing in the early sixth century (see below), would have been able to draw on a wealth of tradition, both written and (presumably) oral. His account of the

² Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 175–8 [no. 37]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 150–1; and trans. Appendix II (o), pp. 645–6. See also Franchi de'Cavalieri, *S. Agnese*, pp. 10–20 (repr. in his *Scritti agiografici*, I, pp. 301–11).

³ PL XVI, cols. 190–1. See discussion by Franchi de'Cavalieri, *S. Agnese*, pp. 1–9 (repr. in his *Scritti agiografici*, I, pp. 293–301); Dassmann, 'Ambrosius und die Märtyrer', pp. 67–8 ('Martyrium und Jungfräulichkeit'); and Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, pp. 71–9.

⁴ The hymn (inc. 'Agnes beatae virginis': ICL 482) consists of eight four-line stanzas of iambic dimeter; ed. M. Simonetti, *Ambrogio: Inni* (Florence, 1988), pp. 50–3 [no. 8]; for discussion, see Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, pp. 238–43.

⁵ The poem (inc. 'Agnes sepulchrum est Romulea in domo': ICL 486) consists of 133 lines of alcaic hendecasyllables; ed. CCSL CXXVI, pp. 386–9. See Franchi de'Cavalieri, *S. Agnese*, pp. 21–7 (repr. in his *Scritti agiografici*, I, pp. 312–17), and Palmer, *Prudentius*, pp. 250–3.

martyrdom of St Agnes is as follows. The author, who identifies himself as Ambrose, sends greetings to (all) holy virgins, and asks them to join him in praising St Agnes, a young virgin who suffered martyrdom, in the thirteenth year of her life (c. 1). While she was returning from school a young nobleman, the son of the urban prefect, fell in love with her and began to pursue her with promises of marriage and wealth (c. 2). To these offers Agnes replied that she was already betrothed to an eternal spouse (c. 3). This statement caused the young man to fall into a swoon; the doctors' diagnosis was that he was in love, and his father, the prefect, was indignant that any spouse could be preferred to his noble son; but it was explained to him that she was a Christian, and that the betrothed in question was Christ (c. 4). The prefect, named Symphronius, summoned her to his tribunal and charged her with being a Christian (c. 5). Agnes explained to the prefect the nature of her love of Christ (c. 6). Symphronius offered her a choice: either sacrifice to the goddess Vesta, or be sent to a brothel; but Agnes refused to sacrifice to any pagan idol (c. 7). She was accordingly stripped naked and taken to a brothel; but she was protected in the brothel by a shining angel, who supplied her with a shining white robe to cover her nakedness (c. 8). Agnes succeeded in turning the brothel into a house of prayer, and young men who entered, on seeing the brilliant light, were chastened; the son of the prefect, however, went boldly in to force himself on her, but was struck down dead (c. 9). On hearing that his son was dead, the prefect went to the brothel; after some negotiation, Agnes agreed to resuscitate the son, who, on being brought back to life, declared his belief in the Christians' God (c. 10). On hearing this statement the pagan priests were enraged, and demanded that she be dealt with; the prefect, although he was thunderstruck by the miracle, feared to act against the pagan priests in favour of Agnes, and therefore handed the business over to the deputy Aspasius; Aspasius ordered Agnes to be burned alive in a huge fire, but the fire was extinguished (c. 11). Aspasius therefore ordered Agnes to be executed by sword, which was duly done (c. 12). The parents of Agnes buried her body on their own estate, on the Via Nomentana; but a furious throng of pagans arrived there, and in the ensuing uproar stoned to death Emerentiana, the foster-sister of Agnes; Emerentiana was buried in a nearby cemetery (c. 13). While keeping vigil at her tomb, the parents of Agnes saw a vision of a procession of virgins dressed in gold, and Agnes among them, who offered them words of consolation (c. 14). When news of this vision spread, Constantia, the daughter of the emperor Constantine, who was afflicted with leprosy, went to pray at the tomb of St Agnes, whereupon she was miraculously cured (c. 15). As a result, she asked her father to construct a basilica at the site of Agnes' tomb, and ordered a tomb for herself to be built at the same place (c. 16). Ambrose, the author, concludes by stating that he had found an account of these events in hidden volumes, and had therefore composed the present work to the glory of virgins such as Agnes (c. 17).

From this summary it will be clear that the author was thoroughly familiar with current legends concerning the martyrdom of St Agnes, and that he attempted to combine them all (or most of them) into a coherent narrative. Thus from Damasus he retained the detail that Agnes was very young (twelve years old) when she faced trial and that she was burned alive, but modestly covered herself with her hair while being burned; from Ambrose the details that, when she was forced to marry, she refused, and so was executed by the sword; and from Prudentius, the detail that, having been sentenced to service in a public brothel, she was approached by an impudent young man who was struck blind in punishment for his impudence. The present *passio* is an amalgam of these details: Agnes, a very young girl, was forced to marry and refused (from Ambrose); she was sentenced to serve in a brothel where she covered her nakedness with her loosened hair (a detail from Damasus), and where a young man who approached her was struck down dead (from Prudentius, where, however, the young man was only struck blind); she was accordingly sentenced to be burned alive (as in Damasus) but miraculously extinguished the fire, so that in the end she was executed by the sword (as in Ambrose and Prudentius).

The author was evidently aware that Ambrose had devoted a number of treatises to the subject of virginity; and so attempted to pass off the present *passio* (BHL 156), which inter alia is a panegyric on virginity (see esp. cc. 3, 10, 14–15, and 17), as a work of Ambrose, to ensure for it a wide audience. The attribution to Ambrose is impossible, as Cécile Lanéry has demonstrated beyond dispute.⁶ The work is more plausibly understood as a composition of the early sixth century, produced by a cleric of S. Agnese at the time when the church was being extensively refurbished by Pope Symmachus (498–514).⁷

At the cemetery where Agnes had been buried, (probably) on imperial property on the Via Nomentana, her cult was very quickly established (early fourth century?), and by the mid-fourth century a huge ambulatory basilica was built on the site by Constantina, the daughter of Constantine, on the model of earlier Constantinian basilicas. The role of Constantina in the building of this basilica is known from a metrical inscription which was composed for its dedication, and was presumably once on view there, but is known only from manuscript sources and medieval *syllogae*.⁸ The name of the patroness is confirmed by the first line of the poem and from the

⁶ See Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, esp. pp. 355–61 ('Un faussaire romain du début du VI^e siècle'), 369–71 (stylistic analysis).

⁷ Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, pp. 360–1, and *eadem*, 'Hagiographie', p. 192, referring to the entry for Pope Symmachus in the *Liber pontificalis*: 'He renewed the apse of St Agnes, which was liable to collapse, and the whole basilica' (ed. Mommsen, p. 125; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 263; trans. Davis, p. 48).

⁸ The first scholar to argue for the identification of the present ruins with the church described in the dedicatory poem was F. W. Deichmann, 'Die Lage der Constantinischen Basilika

acrostic legend spelled out by the first letters of each of its lines: CONSTANTINA DEO.

C onstantina Deum venerans Christoque dicata
 O mnibus inpenis devota mente paratis,
 N umine divino multum Christoque iuvante,
 S acravit templum victricis virginis Agnes,
 T emplorum quod vincit opus terrenaque cuncta 5
 A urea quae rutilant summi fastigia tecti.
 N omen enim Christi celebratur sedibus istis,
 T artaream solus potuit qui vincere mortem,
 I nvectus caelo solusque inferre triumphum,
 N omen Adae referens et corpus et omnia membra 10
 A mortis tenebris et caeca nocte levata.
 D ignum igitur munus, martyr, devotaque Christo,
 E x opibus nostris per saecula longa tenebis,
 O felix virgo memorandi nominis Agnes.⁹

The church of St Agnes was the largest of the basilicas built on the Constantinian model (with three aisles and a semicircular apse, with ambulatory, like that of S. Sebastiano), measuring nearly 100 × 40 m. Constantina was resident in Rome following the murder of her first husband (Hannibalianus)¹⁰ in 337, until 351, when she was married to her second husband (Gallus)¹¹ and took up residence in Antioch. The basilica was presumably built during these years. In any case, it is this church which is referred to in c. 16, below. Of this once-magnificent basilica, nothing remains but the southern wall and part of

der Heiligen Agnes an der Via Nomentana', *RACr* 22 (1946), 213–34, with discussion of the poem at pp. 215–20.

⁹ The poem is listed *ICL* 2659; it is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, pp. 44–5, and Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 246–50 [no. 71]: 'Constantina, (a woman) dedicated to Christ and worshipping God, / having provided all expenses with devout application, / and with divine support and the assistance of Christ greatly helping, / dedicated this church (in the name) of the victorious virgin Agnes, / (a church) which excels all other terrestrial churches [5] / which display the lofty summits of their golden roofs. / For the name of Christ is celebrated in this building, / He Who alone could overcome death, / and Who alone was borne to heaven after His victory on earth, / taking the race of Adam and the body and all its limbs [10] / away from the shadows of death and black darkness. / Therefore you, O martyr devoted to Christ, / shall possess this worthy building (constructed) from my resources, / O blessed virgin Agnes, of memorable reputation.' (Note that the form *Agnes* here (line 4) is the Greek genitive (Ἀγνῆς); in later Latin sources the genitive form *Agnētis* is preferred.)

¹⁰ Hannibalianus was educated at Toulouse and was the nephew of Constantine, as a result of which he became the first husband of Constantina. From 335–7 he served as 'king' (*rex*) of the people of Pontus, and was murdered at Constantinople in 337: see *PLRE* I, p. 407 (s.v. 'Hannibalianus 2').

¹¹ Flavius Claudius Constantius Gallus was Caesar under Constantius from 351 to 354; he was half-brother of the emperor Julian and was married for a short while to Constantina, but was dismissed from his post as Caesar and executed in 354: see *PLRE* I, pp. 224–5 (s.v. 'Fl. Constantius Gallus 4').

the apse, but the immense size of these ruins gives some notion of what the original basilica must have looked like.¹² (The present church of S. Agnese on this site was built in the seventh century, during the pontificate of Honorius I (625–38).)¹³ Constantina also enhanced the site by providing for herself a magnificent mausoleum (in which she was interred after her death in 354); it is this mausoleum which is referred to in c. 16. This mausoleum, known from at least the ninth century as S. Costanza, is the only part of the monumental complex which survives more or less intact, and is one of the great architectural glories of present-day Rome. It is a circular building which was designed in traditional style as a columned ring hall with cupola, and is embellished with a lavish series of mosaics.¹⁴

Text. The Latin *passio* of St Agnes (BHL 156) enjoyed vast circulation: Cécile Lanéry has identified more than 450 manuscripts.¹⁵ Needless to say, perhaps, no attempt has yet been made to collate all these manuscripts, or to determine the main lines of textual transmission. What is translated here is the text printed by Jean Bolland in *Acta SS., Ianuarii* II [1643], pp. 351–4 (repr. *PL* XVII, cols. 735–42).

1. Ambrose, servant of Christ, (sends greetings) to the holy virgins. Let us celebrate the feast day of the holy virgin Agnes [21 January]. Hence let psalms resound, let (liturgical) lessons ring out. Let the throngs of people rejoice, let Christ's poor be given relief. Let us all rejoice in the Lord, and let us call to mind, for the instruction of virgins, how blessed St Agnes suffered martyrdom. In the thirteenth year of her life she destroyed death and discovered life, because she loved the sole author of life. Her infancy was reckoned in years, but the maturity of her mind was immense: a young girl in body, but mature in her mind; beautiful in appearance, but more beautiful in her faith.

2. While she was returning from school,¹⁶ she was adored by the son of the urban prefect. When he had enquired about her parents and established (her

¹² For the original structure of the Constantinian basilica, see Frutaz, *Il complesso monumentale di Sant'Agnese*; Pavolini, 'La basilica costantiniana di S. Agnese'; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 69–73, with pls. 29–31; *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 71–7, with pls. 38–41; and esp. Magnani Cianetti and Pavolini, *La basilica costantiniana*. The latter work is superbly illustrated with photographs, plans, and axonometric drawings; see esp. pp. 54–61 on the entire complex, with pp. 64–73 on the history of excavation of the site, and 98–116 on the basilica.

¹³ On the (present) seventh-century church, see Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 14–38, and Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 57–62.

¹⁴ See Frutaz, *Il complesso monumentale di Sant'Agnese*; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 73–86, with pls. 32–43 (illustrating the mosaics); *idem*, 'Constantiae ecclesia, mausoleum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 140–7, with figs. 143–52. On the mosaics, see Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken*, I, pp. 272–321, and III, pls. 4–7, and H. Stern, 'Les mosaïcs de l'église de Sainte-Constance à Rome', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958), 157–218.

¹⁵ For discussion of the manuscript transmission, see Lanéry, *Ambroise de Milan*, pp. 347–55, with the additions listed in her 'Hagiographie', p. 195 and n. 407.

¹⁶ Note that the *passio* of St Agnes does not begin with a chronological statement indicating who were the emperors at the time of her martyrdom. In c. 15 below, we are told that, following

identity), he began to offer more and more gifts. In due course he brought with him precious ornaments, which were refused by St Agnes as if they were some kind of excrement. Whence it happened that the young man was driven on by a greater goad of love. And thinking that she would wish to receive a higher class of ornament, he took with him a display of precious jewels; and both in his own person as well as through friends and acquaintances and neighbours he began to address the ears of the virgin: to promise riches, houses, possessions, estates, and all delights of this world, if she would not deny her consent to marriage with him.

3. To these offers St Agnes is said to have given the following response to the young man: 'Depart from me, you torch of sin, nourishment of crime, fodder of death: depart from me, because I have been taken up by another lover, who gave me quite pleasing ornaments, and engaged¹⁷ me with the ring of his faith—a lover) more noble than you both by kin and by station. He adorned my right arm with an unimaginable bracelet, and surrounded my neck with precious stones; he placed on my ears pearls of incalculable price, and wrapped me with glistening and shining gems. He put his sign on my face, so that I would admit no lover but him. He dressed me in a gown woven from gold, and adorned me with immense necklaces. He revealed to me incomparable treasures, which he promised to give to me if I should remain constant to him. I cannot therefore even glance at another lover, for it would be to scorn my previous lover, to whom I am bound in love: whose nobility is more lofty, whose might is greater, whose appearance more beautiful, whose love is sweeter, whose distinction is more elegant: from whom a bridal chamber is already arranged for me, whose melodies resound in harmonic tones, whose virgins sing with perfect voices. I received honey and milk from his mouth; I am already bound to his chaste embraces; his body is already bound to mine, and his blood adorned my cheeks. His mother is a virgin; his father knew no woman. The angels obey him, the sun and moon admire his beauty; dead persons are revived by his fragrance, and the infirm are comforted by his touch. His wealth is never exhausted; his riches never decrease. I keep my faith for him alone. I entrust myself to him with total devotion. When I have loved him, I am chaste; when I have touched him, I am pure; when I receive him, I am a virgin. Nor shall offspring be lacking from the marriage, where childbearing takes place without pain, and fertility increases daily.'

the martyrdom of Agnes, 'after a number of years' (*post aliquantos annos*) Constanti(n)a, the daughter of Constantine, learned of the miraculous healing properties of St Agnes; which would, perhaps, imply that Agnes had been executed relatively recently, during the so-called 'Great Persecution' (which in Rome and Italy lasted from 303 to 306), rather than at a distant time in the previous century. But this is only the vaguest of chronological indications.

¹⁷ The verb *subarr(h)o* is not attested in Classical Latin, and is first found in the *Conlationes* of Cassian, written between 425 and 430 (vii. 6. 4); see Blaise, p. 780.

4. The foolish young man, hearing these things, is seized by a blind love,¹⁸ and amidst the pain of his mind and body, is tortured by gasping breath. Amidst all this he lies prostrate on his bed, and through his deep sighs love is diagnosed by doctors. What the doctors had discovered becomes known to his father; and the same promises, which had already been made by the son, are reiterated by the father in pursuit of the virgin. St Agnes refuses, and states that under no circumstances will she violate her undertaking to her previous betrothed. And when the father said that he fulfilled the office of the prefecture, and therefore that he ought not to be preferred to anyone given that he was of senatorial rank, he began violently to ask who this other betrothed might be, concerning whose power Agnes had vaunted herself. There was present one of his followers, who said that she had been a Christian from infancy, and was so taken up with magic arts as to say that Christ was her betrothed.

5. On hearing this, the prefect was delighted, and, having dispatched his household servants, with a great commotion he orders her to be presented to his tribunal. And at first he challenged her in private with gentle speech, and then hammered her with terrible threats. But the virgin of Christ is not enticed by blandishments, nor shaken by terror; remaining constant with the same expression and the same attitude, she scorned in her mind both the prefect's terrifying (threats) and also his blandishments. Symphronius the prefect,¹⁹ seeing such determination in the girl, speaks to her parents. And because they were members of the upper class, and hence he could do no violence to them, he charged them with the name of Christianity.²⁰ On the following day he orders Agnes to be brought into his presence, and again and again he repeats his message concerning the young man's love for her. And when his speech failed him in vain effort, he ordered her once again to be brought before his tribunal; and he said to her: 'The superstitious beliefs of the Christians, on which you pride yourself through magic arts, unless they are taken from you, you will not be able to reject the madness in your heart, nor give your consent to just counsel. Accordingly it is necessary for you to make haste to the venerable goddess Vesta in order that, if it pleases you to persist in your virginity, you may serve her by day and night with holy sacrifices.'

¹⁸ Vergil, *Aen.* iv. 2 ('caeco carpitur igni'), describing the way in which Dido was seized by blind love for Aeneas.

¹⁹ No urban prefect named Symphronius is attested for the years of Diocletian's tetrarchy; see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 110–11, and *PLRE* I, pp. 1052–3 (the entry '*!Symphronius!*' on p. 1053, with the asterisks indicating that the entry is a fictional one, refers to the present text, and is not supported by independent evidence).

²⁰ The charge of Christianity (*titulum eis Christianitatis opposuit*), or (in brief) 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*), is one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, pp. 12–13.

6. To this St Agnes said: 'If I have refused your son, who, though tortured by wicked love, is nonetheless a living being, a man indeed who is capable of reason, who can listen and see and feel and walk about, and I have taken delight in the brightness of this light with all its bounties: if, because of my love for Christ, I can in no way look upon him, how could I possibly worship deaf and dumb idols who are without sense and soul, and bend my neck to empty stones as an insult to the highest God?' Hearing this reply, Symphronius the prefect said: 'I take this to be an opinion resulting from your childishness, and accordingly I put off your execution for blaspheming the gods, because I see that your young age is senseless as yet. Do not disparage yourself so much that you incur the anger of the gods.' St Agnes said: 'Do not so disparage my youth that you think that I wish to placate you. Faith operates not in years, but in understanding: and the Almighty God approves of understanding rather than years. Let your gods get angry, whose anger you do not wish me to incur: let them speak for themselves, let them order it from me, let them command that they be worshipped, let them command that they be adored. But because I see that you incline to what you cannot accomplish, do whatever seems best to you.'

7. Symphronius the prefect said: 'Choose one of two things: either sacrifice to the goddess Vesta with her virgins, or else you will be selling your wares in a brothel with the prostitutes. And the Christians, who have indoctrinated you in these magic arts, will be too far distant from you for you to trust in suffering this calamity with a fearless disposition. Accordingly, as I said, either sacrifice to the goddess Vesta, to the glory of your kinsmen, or else you will be a whore of public abomination, to the disgrace of your parents.' Then, with great determination, St Agnes said: 'If you were to know who my God is, you wouldn't let such things pass from your lips. It is for this reason that I, knowing the power of my Lord Jesus Christ, scorn your threats, believing that I will neither sacrifice to your idols nor be polluted by filth from outside. I have as the guardian of my body the Lord's angel. For the only Son of God, Whom you do not know, is an impenetrable wall, and is my keeper Who never sleeps, and my protector Who never fails me. Your gods, which are made either of bronze, from which cooking-pots might better be made for human use, or else of stone, from which pavements could better be constructed for the avoidance of mud. Divinity, therefore, does not dwell in empty stones, but in heaven; not in bronze, or in any metal, but exists in the heavenly kingdom. As for you and those like you, unless you withdraw from worshipping them, a similar punishment will await you. For just as those (metal) gods are melted in the fire so that they can be remelted, so too will those who worship them be melted down in perpetual flame: not that they be remelted, but that they be confounded in eternity, and so perish.'

8. At this the enraged judge ordered her to be stripped, and to be led naked to a brothel, with a herald proclaiming, 'This is Agnes, a sacrilegious virgin

who blasphemed the gods, and is given over as a prostitute to the brothels.²¹ But immediately as she was stripped, and her hair unbound, the divine grace granted such thickness to her hair that she seemed better covered up by its fibres than by her clothes. Entering the place of filth, she found there an angel of the Lord, appointed so that he could surround her with a mighty light, so that no one could touch or see her because of its brightness. That entire cell shone as if it were the gleaming sun in all its radiance; and the more anyone wished curiously to inspect her with his eyes, the more was the sight of his eyes dulled. When she prostrated herself to the Lord in prayer, a shining white robe appeared before her eyes. And picking it up, she clothed herself and said: 'I thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, Who, counting me in the number of Your handmaidens, have commanded that this clothing be granted to me.' For the cloak was so suitable to the size of her little body, and so gleaming in its brightness, that no one could think that it had been fashioned by anything other than angelic hands.

9. Meanwhile the brothel is turned into a house of prayer:²² in which everyone who entered would pray and show respect, and, showing reverence to the mighty light, would depart in a purer outward state than he had been inwardly on entrance. While these events were taking place, the son of the prefect, who was the cause of all this wickedness, came to the place as if to revile the girl, together with some young men who were his companions, with whom he thought he could work off the wantonness of his sexual appetite. And seeing those in front of him going in as raging boys, venting their foul desires, coming back out with every reverence and great admiration, he began to call them weaklings, and to consider them as empty, soft wretches. And as he was laughing at them, he boldly entered the place in which the virgin was

²¹ Cf. the comment of Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, p. 53: 'The most sordid contribution of the martyrs to the civic life of eastern Roman cities was undoubtedly the enforced prostitution of females'. The enforced placement of a virgin in a brothel became a frequent motif of popular fiction, attested (for example) in the story of Tarsica in the *Historia Apollonii*, cc. 29–36; see discussion by B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances. A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins* (Berkeley, CA, 1967), pp. 313–15. Not surprisingly, the motif was taken over by the authors of *passiones* of martyrs. For discussion of the legal background to the motif in *passiones*, see Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, pp. 25–56, with brief discussion of St Agnes at p. 35, and Rizzo Nervo, 'La vergine e il lupanare', pp. 93–6. The same motif is found in the *passiones* of Chrysanthus and Daria (X.23), Rufina and Secunda (XXXI.5), and Seraphia and Sabina (XXXIV.5).

²² The location of this brothel is unknown. From the eighth century onwards an oratory dedicated to St Agnes has existed at the (present-day) Piazza Navona, currently represented by the much later (baroque) church of Sant'Agnese in Agone. It has been thought that the brothel in question may have been located under one of the exterior arches of the stadium of Domitian (the Piazza Navona occupies the footprint of this stadium): as at the Circus Maximus, the arches under stadia were frequently the site of brothels. But the evidence is weak, and the present *passio* is utterly vague about the location of the brothel/oratory: see S. Episcopo, 'S. Agnes', *LTUR* I, pp. 27–8, and Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, p. 295, as well as the earlier studies by Jubaru, *Sainte Agnès*, pp. 109–20, and Franchi de'Cavalieri, *S. Agnese*, pp. 352–4.

praying. And seeing such a mighty light surrounding her, he did not show reverence to God: but rushing into the light itself, before he could touch her with his hand, he fell on his face, and, strangled by the devil, breathed his last. His companions, realizing that he was delayed inside, assumed that he was fully occupied in obscene activities. And one of the young men, who was a close friend, entered, as if to congratulate him on his sexual prowess; and finding him dead, shouted out in a loud voice: 'Honourable citizens, help (us). This whore has killed the son of the prefect with magic arts.'

10. There is a sudden rush of people to the theatre,²³ and various shouting of the frenzied populace. Some were saying that she is a sorceress, others that she is innocent, others shouted that she was sacrilegious. The prefect, hearing that his son was dead, came to the theatre with great commotion and lamentation. And entering the place in which the body of his son was lying lifeless, he said to the blessed virgin in a mighty outburst: 'O cruellest of all women, did you wish to demonstrate the proof of your magic arts on my son?' And when he had repeated these words, and others like them, and anxiously sought from her the cause of his death, the blessed Agnes said to him: 'He whose will he wished to accomplish, he [the devil] received him into his power. Why should it be that all those who came in to see me were sane? Because all of them showed reverence to God, Who sent to me His angel, who clothed me in this vestment of mercy, and protected my body, which from my infancy has been consecrated and given over to Christ. When they saw the angelic brightness, they all worshipped, and they all departed unharmed. But this impudent one, immediately as he entered, began to rage and roar; and when he stretched out his hand to touch me, the angel administered the death which is a false death.' The prefect says to her: 'It will be clear that you have not accomplished this through magic arts if you will pray to the same angel that he restore my son to me safe and sound.' Blessed Agnes said to him: 'Although your faith does not deserve to receive this from the Lord, nevertheless, because it is time for the power of my Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed, will you all please go outside, so that I can offer a customary prayer to Him.' When they had all gone outside, prostrating herself on the ground she began to beseech the Lord to resuscitate the young man. As she was praying, the angel of the Lord appeared, who lifted her up weeping, and, comforting her spirit, resuscitated the young man. He then went outside, and began to shout out by way of public announcement: 'There is one God in Heaven, and on earth, and in the sea, Who is the God of

²³ It is not clear how the author envisages these events: the son of the urban prefect is struck down dead in the brothel; the enraged populace assembles not at the brothel but at the theatre (*theatrum*) to voice their disapproval, and the urban prefect himself, on hearing the uproar, goes to the theatre (*cum ingenti tumultu et luctu venit ad theatrum*)—and then goes into the place where his dead son is lying (*Et ingressus locum in quo corpus filii eius iacebat*). But the difficulty disappears if we assume that the author has conflated 'theatre' with 'stadium', and is referring to a brothel located beneath one of the exterior arches of the Stadium of Domitian (see n. 22).

the Christians. For all temples are vain; the gods who are worshipped there are vain, and they are incapable of offering any assistance either to themselves or to anyone else.'

11. At this word all the fortune-tellers and priests of the temples are aroused, and there is from them an even more violent response than had been that of the populace at large. And they were all shouting out in one voice: 'Away with this sorceress, away with the witch, who both alters minds and changes personalities.' However, the prefect, seeing these mighty events, was thunderstruck. But fearing the bad publicity if he were to act against the temple priests and to defend Agnes against their judgement, he left the deputy (*uicarius*)²⁴ to deal as judge with the popular dissension. He himself [the prefect] departed in sadness, because he was not in a position to set her free after she had resuscitated his son. Then the deputy, named Aspasius,²⁵ ordered a substantial fire to be kindled in full view of everyone, and ordered her to be cast into the midst of the flames. When this had been done, the flames were immediately divided into two parts, and they burned the turbulent crowd on this side and that; but no flame touched Agnes in any way. Thinking this the result not of divine, but of evil, forces, the people muttered among themselves and sent up countless shouts to the skies. Then St Agnes, stretching out her hands in the midst of the fire, poured out the following prayer to the Lord: 'Almighty God, to be adored, worshipped and feared as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bless You, because through Your only-begotten Son I escaped the threats of wicked men and passed through the devil's filth on an undefiled path. See how I am now suffused with heavenly dew through the operation of the Holy Spirit: the fire beside me dies out, the flame is divided, and the heat of the blaze is flung back at those who kindled it. I bless You, O praiseworthy Father, Who even allow me to proceed to You through the flames. Now I see clearly that in which I believed; what I hoped for, I now possess; what I desired, I now embrace. I confess You with my lips, my heart; I long for You with all my being. Behold I come to You the one and true God, Who with your Son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.'

12. And when she had finished her prayer, the fire was so thoroughly extinguished that not even the warmth of its embers remained. Then Aspasius, deputy (*uicarius*) of the city of Rome, not being able to withstand the people's uproar,²⁶ ordered that a sword be buried in her throat. And with her death Christ consecrated for Himself a bride and martyr, who was soaked in the rosy-red blush of her own blood.

²⁴ The *uicarius* in question is apparently the 'deputy' of the urban prefect (see c. 12: 'deputy of the city of Rome'). The urban prefect, Symphronius, is simply passing the buck to his assistant.

²⁵ No *uicarius* of the urban prefecture named Aspasius is attested; see *PLRE* I, pp. 1078–9.

²⁶ Cf. the *passio* of Pope Clement: 'the urban prefect, not wishing to put up with the insurrection of the people' (V.5, p. 175).

13. Her parents, who were not at all saddened by this, carried off her body in rejoicing, and placed it on their own estate,²⁷ not far from the City, on the road which is called Nomentana. When the entire throng of Christians had assembled there, they were ambushed by the pagans; and seeing the pagan populace arriving bearing arms, they all fled. A few of them were hit by stones, but managed to escape. But Emerentiana, who had been the foster-sister of Agnes and was a holy virgin (though still a catechumen), remained standing there fearlessly and unflinchingly, and she upbraided them with these words: '(You are all) futile wretches, destined to die, hideously cruel, who kill those who worship Almighty God, and kill innocent people in the defence of stone idols!' While she was saying these and similar words to the raging crowds, she was stoned by them, and gave up the ghost while praying at the tomb of St Agnes. It is not in doubt that she was baptized in her own blood, this girl who in defence of what is right calmly received her death while she was confessing the Lord. In that same hour there was a violent earthquake; and although the sky was clear there were such flashes, lightning bolts and thunder that a great part of the insane populace expired. Whence it happened that virtually no member of the populace caused any annoyance to the people arriving at the tombs of the saints. The parents of St Agnes came at night with some priests and removed the body of the holy virgin Emerentiana, and buried it in the vicinity of the estate of St Agnes.²⁸

14. Accordingly, when the parents of St Agnes were keeping vigil at her tomb through night-long prayer sessions, they see in the silence at midnight an army of virgins, all of whom were dressed in robes woven from gold, who passed by in a mighty light: amongst them they see St Agnes gleaming in similar dress, and a lamb whiter than snow standing at her right hand.²⁹ As her parents and those with them were witnessing these things, they experienced

²⁷ The statement that St Agnes was buried on a small estate (*praediolum*) which belonged to her parents, is probably a fiction devised by the author. The large Constantinian basilica which was built to honour the burial place of St Agnes, and the adjacent mausoleum of Constantina (see below), were built on imperial, not private, property. On the cemetery of St Agnes, see *DACL* I/1, cols. 918–65 [H. Leclercq]; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 379–97; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 243–6; Frutaz, *Il complesso*, pp. 25–7; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 141–3; P. M. Barbini, 'S. Agnetis basilica, coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 33–6; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 74–6.

²⁸ St Emerentiana was buried in what is called 'the Great Cemetery' (*coemeterium maius*) on the Via Nomentana; see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 397–412; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 246–9; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 53–7; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 144–7; A. M. Nieddu, 'Maius coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 11–15; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 76–9. According to one of the seventh-century itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, she lay in 'a church above ground' (Appendix IV (a) [§4], p. 660), but no trace of such a church remains. From the church a staircase led to the catacombs beneath; the only remnant of her cult is a fresco, possibly depicting the martyr standing between two of the faithful; on the fresco, see Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*, p. 34 [no. 13], and Bisconti, 'Dentro e intorno all'iconografia martiriale romana', esp. pp. 281–2.

²⁹ The lamb was probably suggested by the similarity of the words *agnes/agnus*.

deep astonishment. But St Agnes asks the holy virgins to stay their pace a little, and stopping herself she said to her parents: 'Be careful not to mourn me as if I were dead: but rejoice with me and congratulate me, since I have taken possession of resplendent dwellings with all these other virgins, and I am joined in heaven to Him Whom I loved with all my heart while I was stationed on earth.' Having said this she departed.

15. Every day this vision was made known publicly by all those who had witnessed it. Whence it happened that, after a number of years, it was reported by those who had seen it to Constantia, the daughter of the emperor Constantine. This Constantia, the queen, was an exceedingly wise virgin, but was so covered with sores that no part of her body, from her head to her feet, remained free of them. Having taken advice, she came one night to the tomb of the martyr in the hope of recovering her health; and even though she was a pagan, she faithfully poured out prayers from the deep conviction of her mind. While doing this she is overcome by the sudden bliss of sleep, and she sees in a vision the blessed Agnes, offering her the following advice: 'Act firmly, Constantia,³⁰ and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is your Saviour, through Whom you may achieve the health of all the sores which you suffer all over your body.' At this word Constantia awoke, fully cured, to the extent that there remained no trace of any sore anywhere on her body.

16. Returning in sound health to the palace, she expressed her joy to her father, the Augustus, and to her brothers the (other) emperors.³¹ The entire city is crowned (with delight): there is joy among the army and among the civilian population, and indeed among all who heard this news. The disbelief of the pagans was confounded, and the Lord's religion was rejoicing. Meanwhile, she asks her father and her brothers the emperors that a basilica be constructed for St Agnes,³² and orders that a tomb for herself [Constantia] be

³⁰ It is possible that the author used the name Constantia (rather than the correct name Constantina: see pp. 351–2) in order to facilitate his play on words: 'constanter age Constantia', lit. 'act constantly with constancy', construing *Constantia* as ablative. It is also the case that the false name *Constantia* came eventually to supplant the correct form *Constantina*, such that the mausoleum of Constantina has come to be known as the church of S. Costanza, where Italian Costanza clearly derives from Constantia, not Constantina.

³¹ Constantine was emperor from 306 to 337; his sons, the brothers of Constantina, were Crispus (assassinated at Pula in 326), Constantinus II (337–40), Constans (337–50), and Constantius II (337–61); see *PLRE* I, p. 1129 [Stemmata 2, part II]. Constantina was no virgin; she was married first to Hannabalianus, king of Pontus and Cappadocia and nephew of Constantine, in 335, but after his murder in 337, she returned to Rome. She is attested on the Danube in 350, where she incited Vetrano to rebel against the usurper, Magnentius, and in 351 she was married a second time to her cousin, Constantius Gallus. She died in Bithynia in 354, and her body was brought back to Rome and buried in the mausoleum which she had constructed for herself next to the basilica of St Agnes (see *PLRE* I, p. 222, s.v. 'Constantina 2', and following notes). The source of this information is Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xiv. 7. 4 (marriage to Gallus), xiv. 11. 6 (death of Constantina in Bithynia), xxi. 1. 5 (burial of Helena, Constantina's younger sister and wife of the emperor Julian, in the mausoleum of Constantina).

³² On the basilica of St Agnes, see p. 353 with n. 12.

located there.³³ This news spreads among all the people, and however many believers came to her tomb were cured, no matter what illness they had experienced. Let no one doubt that Christ accomplishes this up to the present day. Constantia, the daughter of Constantine the Augustus, persevered in her virginity:³⁴ through her (example) many virgins, of the middle classes, as well as those of the upper and senatorial classes, put on the sacred veil. And because the faith does not experience the loss of death, up to the present day many Roman virgins are in attendance on St Agnes, as if she still remained in the flesh; and, inspired by her example, they vigorously remain chaste, undoubtedly believing that in persevering they may acquire the palm of perpetual victory.

17. When I, Ambrose, a servant of Christ, came across a written account of these events in hidden volumes, I could not allow them to remain covered over by an infertile silence. As I realized what she had accomplished, I wrote this account to the glory of such a great martyr; and also, you virgins of Christ, I believed that the text of her suffering deserved to be circulated for your edification, beseeching the love of the Holy Spirit, so that, in imitation of you, my effort may bear fruit in the Lord's sight. Amen.

³³ On the mausoleum of Constantina, which lies adjacent to the basilica of St Agnes, see n. 14.

³⁴ The virginity of Constantina is pure fiction; Ammianus Marcellinus describes her, during the period of her marriage to Gallus, as 'Megaera quaedam mortalis, inflammatrix saevientis assidua, humani cruoris avida' (*Res gestae* xiv. 1. 2).

XVIII

SS. Gallicanus, John, and Paul

c.514 × 550; relevant to the *titulus*-church of SS. John and Paul (Caelian Hill)

The events narrated in the present *passio* begin during the reign of Constantine the Great (d. 337), in the period following the cessation of the so-called ‘Great Persecution’ and the peace of the Church, but the martyrdoms of the saints are described as having taken place later, during the brief reign of Julian ‘the Apostate’ (361–3), who is portrayed as having instituted a savage persecution of Christians. The martyrdoms are narrated in two complementary sections: those of Gallicanus (and Hilarinus) in cc. 1–8, and those of John and Paul in cc. 9–14.¹ Unlike many of the *passiones* translated in the present volume, some of the actors in the present work seem to correspond to characters and events of mid-fourth-century Rome. Before discussing these, it is necessary to provide a summary.

During the reign of Constantine, the general Gallicanus defeated the Persians and expelled them from Syria, as a result of which he sought the hand of the emperor’s daughter Constantia; Constantine himself demurred, knowing that Constantia was a Christian virgin, but Constantia herself agreed to marry Gallicanus once he had conquered the Scythians in Thrace, on condition that he take with him Constantia’s household chamberlains, John and Paul (c. 1). The eunuch brothers John and Paul were duly transferred to Gallicanus and, in return, the virgin daughters of Gallicanus were assigned to Constantia, who undertook to convert them to Christianity (c. 2). Gallicanus returned to Rome after defeating the Scythians in Thrace, and explained to Constantine that he had been besieged in Philippopolis by the Scythians, but had managed to raise

¹ The entire *passio* is listed *CPL* 2193; the first section (cc. 1–8) is listed as *BHL* 3236, the second (cc. 9–14) as *BHL* 3238. For discussion of the text, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 145–52, 245–6, and 309–10; Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘Di una probabile fonte’, pp. 53–65; *idem*, ‘Del testo della *Passio SS. Iohannis et Pauli*’, pp. 41–62; *DACL* II/2, cols. 2832–70 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* VI, cols. 1046–9 [G. De Sanctis]; Grégoire and Orgels, ‘S. Gallicanus’, *Byzantion* 24 (1954), 579–601 [reprinted, with the same title, in *Académie royale de Belgique. Bulletin de la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques*, 5th ser. 42 (1956), 125–46; I quote from that in *Byzantion*]; De Sanctis, *I santi Giovanni e Paolo*; Leyser, ‘“A Church in the House of the Saints”’, esp. pp. 147–52; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 204–15; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 289–97.

the siege and defeat the enemy through the assistance of Christ, to Whom he had prayed at the suggestion of John and Paul (c. 3). But having defeated the Scythians with Christ's aid, Gallicanus decided to renounce his marriage plans (c. 4). Constantine joyfully reported to him that, in the meantime, his two daughters had become Christians; Gallicanus was appointed consul and manumitted 5,000 slaves (c. 5). He then went to Ostia, where he became a companion of the holy man Hilarinus; he built a church there, and devoted himself to care of the poor (c. 6). When Julian was made Caesar by Constantius (Constantine having died in the meanwhile), he promulgated a law saying that Christians were not permitted to own property; since Gallicanus owned four houses in Ostia, he was obliged either to sacrifice to the pagan gods, or to go into exile; he left Italy and joined a Christian community in Alexandria, but was executed there for his continuing refusal to sacrifice (c. 7). Hilarinus also refused to sacrifice, and was beaten to death (c. 8). Julian began a campaign to confiscate the property of Christians, and when he heard that John and Paul were distributing to the poor the wealth they had inherited from Constantia, he sent his officers to tell them that they ought to show more loyalty to him, but they replied that they were true Christians, whose loyalty was to God (cc. 9–10). Julian gave them ten days' respite to reconsider their position (c. 11). John and Paul spent the ten days disposing of their property and giving it to the poor; on the tenth day one Terentianus was sent to their house, either to compel them to sacrifice, or to execute them (c. 12). They were beheaded and buried in a pit dug in their own house (c. 13). Julian was killed in battle with the Persians; the son of Terentianus was possessed by a demon, but was healed by the intercession of John and Paul, a miracle which caused Terentianus to convert and to seek baptism (c. 14).

In the early chapters of the work (cc. 1–8), the author attempts to evoke a plausible historical context for the martyrdoms, particularly that of Gallicanus, by naming genuine events and persons; but although the names may be genuine, their activities are wholly fictitious. There was indeed a consul named Gallicanus while Constantine was emperor, and a man named Gallicanus is recorded in the *Liber pontificalis* (in the Life of Pope Silvester) as the benefactor of a church dedicated to SS. Peter, Paul, and John in Ostia;² but the involvement of this Gallicanus in a military campaign in Persia, and subsequently in the Scythians' siege of Philippopolis in Thrace, is pure fantasy (c. 1). The king of the Scythians (Goths) named Bardan is a fiction (c. 4). Constantine did have a daughter who could be conceived as pious, inasmuch as she constructed her mausoleum adjacent to the church of St Agnes; but her name was Constantina, not Constantia (the erroneous name Constantia was taken over from the *passio*

² *LP* (ed. Mommsen, p. 68; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 184; trans. Davis, p. 25): 'quod obtulit Gallicanus basilicae supra scriptae sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli et Iohannis baptistae...'.

of St Agnes: XVII.15–16), and she was no docile virgin but a vicious harridan. Gallicanus, on returning in triumph to Rome, is greeted by three emperors all of whom are denoted as Augustus: Constantine, Constantius, and Constans (c. 3); but Constantius and Constans only became Augusti on 9 September 337, nearly four months after the death of their father Constantine (22 May 337). In short, the historical context of the martyrdom of St Gallicanus is pure fiction.

Unlike the martyrdom of St Gallicanus, whose character was suggested by a historically-attested person, the martyrdoms of SS. John and Paul are purely a work of fiction, and it is extremely doubtful that two such martyrs ever existed: they are not, for example, recorded against 26 June—the feast day on which they are later commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 654)—in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I). We have seen that a historically-attested person named Gallicanus was the benefactor of a church in Ostia dedicated to SS. Peter, Paul, and John (the Baptist), and it has been suggested that the last two names provided the germ from which the legend of SS. John and Paul was subsequently developed.³ The conception of the two brothers as eunuch *palatini* in the imperial household of Constanti(n)a, daughter of the emperor Constantine, is clearly indebted to the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus (no. VIII), where the brothers Nereus and Achilleus are portrayed as eunuch *palatini* in the household of Domitilla, niece of the emperor Domitian. The circumstances of their martyrdom were arguably suggested by that of Juveninus and Maximinus, two martyrs of Antioch who were secretly murdered in their own home on the orders of Julian ‘the Apostate’, as described in a sermon by John Chrysostom.⁴ In other words, the *passio* of SS. John and Paul was a work of pious fiction, cobbled together from many extraneous elements. But whatever its origin, it served to establish John and Paul in the first rank of Roman martyrs, who were (and are) commemorated *nominatim* in the prayer *Communicantes* in the Canon of the Mass (Appendix V (a), p. 667), and by mass-sets in all the early sacramentaries.⁵ This popularity no doubt derives also from the prestigious location of a church in their name on the Caelian Hill.

³ The suggestion was first made by Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘Del testo della *Passio* SS. *Iohannis et Pauli*’, pp. 61–2; and see Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 213–14.

⁴ The sermon *In Iuveninum et Maximinum martyres* (BHG 975; CPG 4349) is ed. PG L, cols. 571–8. It is not known whether a Latin translation of the sermon was ever made. The influence of this sermon on the author of the present *passio* was first suggested by Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘Di una probabile fonte’, pp. 59–60, and *idem*, ‘Del testo della *Passio* SS. *Iohannis et Pauli*’, p. 46, with nn. 1–2. In addition to John Chrysostom, Franchi de’Cavalieri also refers to mention made of these two martyrs by Theodoretus, *Historia ecclesiastica* [CPG 6222] iii. 11 and 15, where they are described as ἀσπιδηφόροι [that is, *scutarii*] at the court of Julian in Antioch.

⁵ Namely the so-called ‘Leonine Sacramentary’ of the sixth century (Appendix V (b), p. 668); the ‘Old Gelasian Sacramentary’ of the later seventh (Appendix V (c), p. 669), where both the vigil (25 June) and the feast itself on 26 June are commemorated; and the Gregorian sacramentaries, also of seventh-century date (Appendix V (d), p. 672).

The present *passio* mentions the *domus* of John and Paul, where they are said to have been murdered and then buried, but it makes no mention of a church in their name. However, by the late sixth century at latest, there was a *titulus*-church in the names of John and Paul (*titulus SS. Iohannis et Pauli*) on the *Clivus Scauri* on the Caelian Hill, for this church was represented by two priests at the synod held under Pope Gregory in 595.⁶ This *titulus*-church was the successor of a church known by the end of the fifth century as either the *titulus Pammachii* or the *titulus Vizantis*;⁷ and the name of the *titulus Pammachii* is confirmed by an earlier inscription dating from the pontificate of Innocent I (402–17).⁸ One or other of these men—Byza(n)s and Pammachius—was presumably the founder of the *titulus*-church; or perhaps they were both its founders, even if their respective roles in the foundation are unclear.⁹ The identity of Byza(n)s is unknown; but Pammachius is plausibly identified with the wealthy Roman senator, sometime proconsul of Africa, who was a lifelong friend of Jerome and Paulinus of Nola,¹⁰ and who after the death of his wife Paulina c.396 devoted himself to charitable Christian works, establishing inter alia a hospital (*xenodochium*) at Porto; he died in 410.¹¹ In any case the church of SS. John and Paul is a prominent basilica, dating essentially from the early fifth century and preserved to this day on the Caelian Hill.¹² Excavations beneath this present church revealed an extremely complex history for the site.¹³ A number of apartment blocks (*insulae*) were found, the façades of which faced the *Clivus Scauri* and were integrated into the later basilica. These contained at least three separate *domus*, the walls of which were decorated with elaborate frescoes depicting pagan scenes; but in one of the *domus* was found what was obviously a Christian shrine, decorated with a fresco depicting a martyr flanked by men and women worshippers, datable (on stylistic grounds)

⁶ MGH, *Epistulae* I, p. 367 ('Iohannes presbyter tituli sanctorum Iohannis et Pauli').

⁷ MGH, AA XII, pp. 411 (*titulus Pammachi*), 412 (*titulus Pammachi*), 413 (*titulus Vizantis*).

⁸ See de Rossi, *ICUR* II, pp. 322 and 440.

⁹ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 26–33, and Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 208–9 and 239–41.

¹⁰ Among Jerome's correspondence, *Epp.* xlviii–xlix, lvii, and lxvi (*CSEL* LIV, pp. 347–87, 503–26, and 647–65 [a letter of consolation on the death of Paulina], respectively) are addressed to Pammachius; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* xiii is a letter of consolation to Pammachius on the death of his wife Paulina (*CSEL* XXX, pp. 84–107).

¹¹ See *PLRE* I, p. 663.

¹² See Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 265–300, with figs. 149–58 and pls. XXXV–XXXIX; Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 481–90; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 155–62, with pls. 78–85; F. Astolfi, 'SS. Iohannes et Paulus, titulus', *LTUR* III, pp. 105–7; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 165–72.

¹³ The most thorough account of the excavations is Prandi, *Il complesso monumentale*, esp. pp. 76–94 (on the *domus* destroyed or modified by the construction of the basilica), 115–31 with pls. I–X (on the *titulus Byzantis* and the *titulus Pammachii*), and pp. 423–91 ('il monumento paleocristiano'); but see also (briefly) Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 552–3, and, more recently, Bartolozzi Casti, 'Nuove osservazioni sulle basiliche', in Guidobaldi and Guidobaldi, *Ecclesiae urbis*, II, pp. 953–77.

to the late fourth century.¹⁴ The Christian fresco cannot be thought to illustrate the martyrdom of either John or Paul; but the shrine is important in being the unique example in Rome of a domestic shrine which was subsequently rebuilt as a basilica. It is also possible that an altar in this shrine was dedicated to SS. John and Paul, because a brief metrical inscription in Damasan style (if not certainly by Pope Damasus himself) refers to their martyrdom:

Paul and John protect this altar of the Lord;
they suffered martyrdom together for the name of Christ,
purchasing the rewards of (eternal) life with their dark red blood.¹⁵

Whether or not the inscription once adorned the shrine, the fresco proves that the room was used for Christian worship in the fourth century.

Given the prominent location of the basilica of SS. John and Paul, and the fact that it dates from the early fifth century, it must have struck readers of the present *passio* (BHL 3236 + 3238) as odd that no mention is made in the text of the church itself. Given this silence, it is not surprising that a later reviser should have undertaken to supply the omission, and to reshape the *passio* so as to reflect the growing prestige of SS. John and Paul: by eliminating the first eight chapters (cc. 1–8) which describe the martyrdoms of Gallicanus and Hilarinus, so as to bring the martyrdom of John and Paul more prominently into focus; and then by adding a chapter explaining how the basilica in their name was constructed under the auspices of the senator Byzantius (*sic*, for Byza(n)s, gen. Byzantis) and his son Pammachius, thus seemingly giving credence to the names by which the *titulus*-church was earlier designated (*titulus Vizantis*, *titulus Pammachi*). For good measure the reviser added the martyrdoms of several more saints, all reported as having been buried in the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo—Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta—together with the names of the dutiful Christians who attended to their burial: John,¹⁶ Pigmenius,¹⁷ and Flavian. This work of revision is referred to by scholars as Recension B;¹⁸ it is preserved *inter alia* in a manuscript written

¹⁴ See Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken*, II, pp. 631–52, and IV, pls. 127–8; more conveniently accessible are the coloured illustrations in Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 157–8, figs. 80–3, and *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 166–9, figs. 100–4.

¹⁵ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 229–30 [no. 61], with discussion by Prandi, *Il complesso monumentale*, pp. 122–3. The epigram is preserved uniquely in a *sylloge* written c.800 at St Gallen (now Leiden, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, Voss. Lat. Q. 69, fols. 7–19; see Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, X, no. 1585).

¹⁶ A dutiful Christian named John who attends to the burial of martyrs figures in other *passiones*: those of Polychronius and companions (XVI.35), Pope Marcellus (XX.4), Marius and Martha (XXII.3), and Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI.1).

¹⁷ Pigmenius, together with Bibiana, subsequently became the subject of a derivative *passio* (BHL 6849), translated below as no. XXXVIII. See Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 289, who dates it to the second half of the sixth century.

¹⁸ This revised version is listed BHL 3242, and ed. in *Acta SS., Iunii V* [1709], pp. 159–60. For discussion, see Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Del testo della *Passio SS. Iohannis et Pauli*', pp. 43–6;

in southern Italy c.600,¹⁹ which carries the implication that the work of revision was carried out during the sixth century, by which time the present *passio* must also have been in existence. Because of the importance of the information pertaining to the *titulus*-church, I have included a translation of Recension B as an appendix to the main *passio*.

Text. The principal text translated here is that of the earliest recension (Recension A), as printed by Mombritius (I, pp. 569–72). The chapter numbering is my own. The Appendix is a translation of the so-called Recension B (as printed in the Bollandists' *Acta SS.*, *Iunii V* [1709], pp. 159–60), a late sixth-century revision intended to identify SS. John and Paul of the *passio* with the well-known church on the Caelian Hill, and to explain the sequence by which a *titulus*-church in the name of Byzan(tiu)s and Pammachius became that of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

1. During the reign of the Augustus Constantine,²⁰ under Gallicanus,²¹ the commander (*dux*) of the Roman field army, the Persian peoples who had invaded Syria were defeated and powerfully subjugated.²² When Gallicanus had been honoured by triumphal processions, and was both accepted and dear

Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 209–11; and the important study by Leyser, "A Church in the House of the Saints", esp. pp. 147–52. Leyser is right to refer to the revised work simply as the *Passio SS. Iohannis et Pauli*, since Gallicanus has been entirely eliminated from it.

¹⁹ St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. 1. 5 (S. Italy, s. vi/vii; prov. Corbie), fols. 176–83; see Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, XI, no. **646. The St Petersburg manuscript is a detached portion of a manuscript, the remnants of which are in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, in Paris (BNF, lat. 12634, listed *ibid.* V, no. 646); the St Petersburg leaves were acquired by Pierre Dubrowski during the French Revolution (1791), and taken to Russia.

²⁰ There is a vast bibliography on Constantine (I), often called 'the Great', who was Augustus from 306 (and sole emperor from 324) until his death in 337; see esp. A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1972); Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 3–77; and PLRE I, pp. 223–4 (s.v. 'Fl. Val. Constantinus 4'). The indispensable source for his life is Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*.

²¹ It is interesting that there were two senior magistrates named Gallicanus during the reign of Constantine (see PLRE I, pp. 382–3): Ovinus Gallicanus, who was urban prefect and then consul in 317; and Flavius Gallicanus, who was consul in 330. Either of these men may have been the Gallicanus who made substantial gifts to the church of SS. Peter, Paul, and John the Baptist at Ostia, according to the life of Pope Silvester in the *Liber pontificalis* (ed. Mommsen, p. 68; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 184; trans. Davis, p. 25: 'Gallicanus presented to the above basilica of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and of John the Baptist [sc. in Ostia] the following...'). Strong arguments in favour of identifying the benefactor of Ostia with Ovinus Gallicanus are made by E. Champlin, 'Saint Gallicanus (consul 317)', *Phoenix* 36 (1982), 71–6.

²² Relations between the Roman empire and Persia were never stable; the nadir was probably reached when the emperor Valerian was captured by the Persians and died in captivity (AD 260). On several occasions during the third century Persia invaded Syria (Jones, *LRE*, p. 25), but severe defeats were inflicted on the Persians by Carus and Probus (*ibid.* p. 35), and in 298 Galerius achieved a decisive victory over Narses (*ibid.* p. 39, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, pp. 17–19), which resulted in an uneasy peace, which lasted until after the death of Constantine. Constantine's appointment of his nephew, Hannibalianus (on whom see no. XVII, p. 352 and n. 10) as king of Armenia inevitably precipitated war with Persia, and there were major Persian offensives in 338, 346, and 350, which form the background to Julian's invasion of Persia in 363,

to the Augustus, he repeatedly sought as his wife the emperor's daughter, the holy virgin Constantia.²³ And he was pursuing this with no small insistence at the time when the Scythians, who had occupied Dacia and Thrace,²⁴ were posing a threat. And because he was a man of great authority and power, being both *comes* and prefect,²⁵ he asked that it should come about, with the assent of the Roman populace. But Constantine the Augustus was saddened by this for a long time, knowing that his daughter could more easily be killed than called back from her holy undertaking. When she had attempted to soothe her father's anxiety through the pursuit of holy behaviour, she said to him: 'If I wasn't entirely certain that I could not in any way be forsaken by God, there might rightly be some opportunity for my apprehension and for your concern. But since I am certain that God is with me, lay aside all your concern and promise that you will give me to him as wife so that, when he has conquered the Scythians, he will accept me as his bride, being both victor and consul. For the sake of (implementing) this promise, let him allow to remain with me, up to the day of the wedding, the two virgin daughters whom he has from his deceased wife, if (in return) he will willingly allow to remain with him the Grand

and his death during this campaign (*ibid.* pp. 123–4). But there is no record that any military commander named Gallicanus took part in these campaigns.

²³ The name of the emperor's daughter was correctly Constantina, not Constantia (the name Constantia has probably been taken over from the *passio* of St Agnes: see no. XVIII, nn. 30–1 and 51). Constantina was married to Hannibalianus from 335 until his death in 337, after which she returned to Rome. She is attested on the Danube in 350, and in 351 was given in marriage to Gallus Caesar, with whom she lived in Antioch. She died in Bithynia in 354; her body was taken back to Rome and buried in her mausoleum on the Via Nomentana (as described in the *passio* of St Agnes, above, XVII.16). See *PLRE* I, p. 222 (s.v. 'Constantina 2'), and no. XVII (p. 361, n. 31).

²⁴ The term 'Scythian' is used by some authors of late antiquity to refer to the Goths, who were the persistent enemy of the Romans, in Dacia and Moesia (what are now Romania and Bulgaria), during the fourth century. See H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley, CA, and London, 1988), pp. 43–75; J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (London, 1989), pp. 304–82; and P. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (Oxford, 1991), esp. pp. 107–21 (on the period from 332 to 375). There is a brief introduction to the question in P. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, TTH 11 (Liverpool, 1991), pp. 17–26 and 51–101 (for the archaeological background). It is worth mentioning that according to Zosimus (ii. 21) and the *Anonymus Valesianus* (i. 7), there was an invasion of Thrace by the Goths in 323, as pointed out by Grégoire and Orgels, 'S. Gallicanus', p. 582.

²⁵ The career of Gallicanus is described only vaguely. We are to assume that, after being the commander (*dux*) of a successful campaign against the Persians, he led the field army into Thrace, where he was besieged at Philippopolis. Jones points out that the commanders of field armies in Illyricum and Thrace sometimes bore the lower title of *comes* (*LRE*, p. 125). On the other hand, since Gallicanus is described as a prefect, he was a member of the *consistorium*, and would have been entitled to the (higher) title of *comes*. The author does not indicate which prefecture was in question: possibly, in view of his military campaign in Thrace, he is being conceived as praetorian prefect of the East (which included the dioceses of Thrace, Asiana, Pontica, and Oriens): see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 370–1, and A. Chastagnol, 'Les préfets du prétoire de Constantin', *Revue des études anciennes* 70 (1968), 321–52. Our Gallicanus crowned his illustrious career by becoming consul (c. 5); cf. n. 21.

Chamberlain (*praepositus*)²⁶ and the Superintendent of the chamberlains (*primicerius*),²⁷ John and Paul (respectively), so that through my companions [John and Paul] he will be able to speak and recognize (my views), and I, through his daughters, may get to know his wishes, customs, and plans.’

2. Just as the virgin of Christ had arranged, under the pretext, as it were, of a contractual agreement, the two eunuch brothers²⁸ were handed over from the household of Augustus (to Gallicanus), and the two sisters, the daughters of Gallicanus, were given over to Augustus himself. They had been so well instructed in the liberal arts that their equal could scarcely be found among learned men; one was called Attica, the other Artemia. When Constantia knew that they were coming to her, extending her hands she prayed to the Lord as follows: ‘Lord God Almighty, Who through the prayers of Your martyr Agnes cleansed me of leprosy and mercifully revealed to me the pathway to Your love²⁹—indeed You opened the bridal chamber of Your virgin Mother when you revealed Yourself as Son and Bridegroom: for You are born of Mary, (yet) You are proven to be the Father of Mary; You were suckled from her breasts, (but) You also nourish the entire world, including her by whom You were Yourself suckled and nourished; You, a little child increasing in age, You Who grant the power of increase to the entire world; You advancing in wisdom Who are Yourself the totality of wisdom, You Who are so great that there is nothing greater, You truly a man born in time from a mother, truly God born from the Father without a mother, as God You created from God those things which did not exist, born from a mother without a fleshly father, You restored to life those things which suffered death, You poured forth in light are illuminated (by it), though it is You who give sight to all humans coming into this world: I beseech You, believing that You Yourself commanded it, I seek You in performing what You Yourself promised when You said, “Amen

²⁶ The title of John’s post was correctly *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, that is, Grand Chamberlain of the imperial bedchamber of the empress; the holder of this post was the director of the majority of palace servants and held the rank of *illustris*. On the office, see Dunlap, ‘The Office of the Grand Chamberlain’, in Boak and Dunlap, *Two Studies*, pp. 161–324, esp. 178–89 (on the history of the office in the fourth and fifth centuries); and (briefly) Jones, *LRE*, pp. 127, 335–8, and 567–70. The office is first attested c.326 (at Constantinople).

²⁷ The title of Paul’s post was correctly *primicerius sacri cubiculi*; the holder of this post was the senior eunuch and superintendent of the chamberlains of the imperial bedchamber of the empress; see esp. Dunlap, ‘The Office of the Grand Chamberlain’, pp. 203–7, as well as Jones, *LRE*, pp. 567–70.

²⁸ On eunuchs as members of the imperial court, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 851–2, as well as Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 172–96, Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene*, esp. pp. 130–76 (on eunuchs in the Roman empire in the third century), and S. Tougher (ed.), *Eunuchs in Antiquity and Beyond* (Cardiff, 2002). On the role of eunuchs in Roman *passiones martyrum*, see De Gaiffier, ‘Palatins et eunuques’, esp. pp. 43–4 on John and Paul; see also (briefly) Boulhol and Cochelin, ‘La rehabilitation de l’eunuque’, pp. 49–76, with mention of SS. John and Paul at p. 70. See also no. VIII (p. 206 and nn. 17–18).

²⁹ See no. XVII.15 (p. 361).

I say to you, that whatsoever you should seek from the Father in my name will be granted to you."³⁰ Accordingly I request, O Lord, that You may convert these daughters of Gallicanus, and direct Gallicanus himself to chastity, who is attempting to take me from You (and from) belief in You. Open, O Lord, my mouth to their ears, and open the ears of their heart to my speech, and open the door of their assent to me, and pour such power into my words that they may desire to be consecrated to You, cursing the intercourse of the flesh, and from this desire may such great love arise in their hearts that they seek fervently to proceed to Your heavenly bridal chamber; may they, gleaming with their lamps full of oil and with the flames of Your love, attain it so that they may recognize the place granted to them in the company of the Wise Virgins,³¹ and rejoicing in Your mercy may they seek nothing of this earth and may they long for You alone with the whole desire of their being.' I learned from Constantia herself that she had uttered this prayer, which I read as she had written it down. But as to how she was able to turn Attica and Artemia to God, I pass by quickly for sake of narrating the martyrdom of Gallicanus.

3. When Gallicanus arrived in triumph, he was received by Constantine,³² Constantius,³³ and Constans,³⁴ the Augusti, as well as by the imperial court and by the senate. He did not enter Rome before he had gone to the holy shrine of St Peter the apostle. Constantine said to him: 'When you set off to war, you entered the Capitol and its temples and sacrificed to demons; now, returning in triumph, you worship Christ and His apostle. Explain in detail to me, who am eager to know, what this change in procedure might mean.' Then Gallicanus said: 'When the Scythians had trapped me in the city of Philippopolis in Thrace,³⁵ and had inflicted much carnage on our troops,

³⁰ Cf. John 15: 16 ('ut quodcumque petieritis patrem in nomine meo det vobis').

³¹ Matt. 25: 1–13.

³² The mention of these three names as Augusti points to the period 337–340; but in this case it would appear that the author has confused Constantine (I) 'the Great' with his (possibly illegitimate) son, Constantine (II), who was Augustus from 337 to 340. On Constantine II, see *PLRE* I, p. 223 (s.v. 'Fl. Claudius Constantinus 3'). But see c. 5, where Helena (mother of Constantine 'the Great'), and Constantina, daughter of Constantine 'the Great' are both mentioned, which indicates that the author has indeed confused Constantine I and Constantine II.

³³ Flavius Julius Constantius (II) was the third son of Constantine; he became Caesar in 324, but did not become Augustus until after his father's death in 337, and held the supreme imperial power until his death in Cilicia in 361. A substantial part of the surviving books of the *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus treat the reign of Constantius II: books xiv–xxi, with a summary of his virtues and defects at xxi. 16. 1–21. And see *PLRE* I, p. 226 (s.v. 'Fl. Iul. Constantius 8').

³⁴ Flavius Julius Constans was Constantine's youngest son; he was made Caesar in 333, but did not become Augustus until after his father's death in 337; he was killed at Autun in 350 by the usurper Magnentius. See *PLRE* I, p. 220 (s.v. 'Fl. Iul. Constans 3').

³⁵ Correctly Philippopolis in the province of Moesia Inferior (Plovdiv in modern Bulgaria): see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 22 (B6). For an earlier destruction of Philippopolis by the Goths (Scythians), see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxxi. 5. 17 (referring to the principate of Decius). Grégoire and Orgels suggest that the vague reference in Zosimus (ii. 21) to 'the city' (πόλις) in Thrace attacked by the Goths in 323, may be a transmissional error for Φιλιππούπολις,

being afraid to engage with them because my own forces were slight, but of the enemy there was an uncountable number of soldiers, I applied myself to sacrifices to god and offered meaningless sacrificial animals to Mars. Why spin out the story? In the end the siege gained strength and all my tribunes and soldiers gave themselves up to the enemy. And as I sought to find an avenue of escape, Paul and John—of whom one was the grand chamberlain, the other the executive household officer of my wife, your Excellency's daughter Constantia Augusta—told me to offer a prayer to the God of heaven, 'that if He were to free you from the siege, you would become a Christian, and would be the victor which otherwise you were not.' I confess, most revered Emperor, that as soon as the prayer had issued from my mouth, a young man of immense height appeared to me, carrying on his shoulder a cross, saying, 'Take your sword and follow me.'³⁶

4. 'As I was following him, armed soldiers appeared to me on this side and that, supporting me and saying, "We offer you our service: enter the enemy camp, and, holding up an unsheathed sword with both your right and left hands,³⁷ see to it that you come to their king, named Bardan".³⁸ When I arrived there with them [the supporters], he threw himself at my feet and begged forgiveness for the blood he had spilled. I did not have a single one of them put to the sword. I took delivery, from those soldiers, of Bardan the king, in chains, together with his two sons, and all the provinces of Thrace were freed from the Scythians and made tributaries. All the tribunes, who wished to return to me with their troops, could not be received back by me unless they became Christians. I promoted to a more exalted station those who agreed, with those who did not agree being released from military service. Having become a Christian, I devoted myself to God to the extent that I even promised to abstain from marriage. You now have an army increased fourfold: you have the Scythian peoples as subjects and tributaries, and all the Thracian provinces liberated. Now order that things go favourably for me, so that I may give

'Philippopolis' ('St Gallicanus', p. 583). The suggestion is ingenious; but it must be said that Grégoire and Orgels try too hard to make the evidently fictitious events in the *passio* correspond to historically-attested events.

³⁶ There is an intentional allusion here to the famous vision seen by Constantine before his victory over Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge (28 October 312), as described by Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* [CPL 91], c. 44 (PL VII, cols. 260–1), and more fully by Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, i. 28–32, trans. Cameron and Hall, pp. 80–2, with commentary at pp. 204–13). (It is not clear whether Eusebius' (Greek) *Life of Constantine* would have been available in Latin in the early sixth century.) Grégoire and Orgels improbably argue that Constantine's vision took place on the eve of the Gothic attack on Philippopolis in 323 ('S. Gallicanus', pp. 592–7).

³⁷ Possibly the instruction implies that the sword is to be held with the handle and cross-guard uppermost, in the semblance of the Cross.

³⁸ No king of the Goths named 'Bardan' appears to be attested in fourth-century sources. Grégoire and Orgels improbably suggest that 'Bardan' is to be identified with the Gothic king, Rausimod, mentioned by Zosimus ('St Gallicanus', p. 584, n. [2]).

myself to the religion which I learned, and continue completely in the truth which I promised.'

5. Then the emperor Constantine threw himself into his arms, reporting all the things which had happened concerning his daughters, and how they were now usefully consecrated as Christian virgins, and that God had called these two virgins to His grace, and by what means He had begun their instruction, taking them to the highest level. Then as Gallicanus was entering the palace with the Augustus, Helena [Constantine's mother]³⁹ with her daughter Constantia and the two daughters of Gallicanus ran up; and they all poured out tears filled with joy. Gallicanus was not allowed to return to his own dwelling, but remained in the palace as the son-in-law of the emperors, contemplating his daughters thus weeping in praise of God. As soon as he wished to depart as a private citizen, he went forth as consul at the request of the emperors;⁴⁰ and, being established in this position of power, he manumitted slaves as free Roman citizens to the number of five thousand;⁴¹ he granted them estates and houses, and ordered that all his possessions be divided and distributed to the poor, excepting that which belonged by right to his daughters.

6. Then he made himself the companion of a certain holy man named Hilarinus who was dwelling in Ostia;⁴² he had his dwelling-place extended in order to receive pilgrims, as he had himself been; and many of his slaves whom he had freed remained with him. And his renown was broadcast through the entire city, such that people coming from east and west could see a man, who had been a senator and a consul, and a companion of the emperors, washing feet (of pilgrims), setting table, pouring out water for hand-washing, attentively attending to the ill, and performing all the duties of holy service. He first built a church in Ostia and endowed ministries of clerics.⁴³ The holy deacon Laurence appeared to him in a dream, urging him to arrange to have a church built in his name at the gate which up to the present time is called 'Laurentia'.⁴⁴ Asked if he was willing to be elevated to

³⁹ The empress Helena was the mother of Constantine (I) 'the Great'; she was the wife (or perhaps merely the mistress), of Constantius Chlorus, Constantine's father. She was made Augusta by Constantine in c. 325, and died, aged nearly 80, in about 330. See *PLRE* I, pp. 410–11.

⁴⁰ There were two consuls named Gallicanus at this period: Ovinus Gallicanus (consul in 317), and Flavius Gallicanus (consul in 330); see n. 21.

⁴¹ It was customary for a consul, on entering office, to manumit slaves, so there is nothing exceptional about Gallicanus' action here, save the grossly exaggerated figure of 5,000.

⁴² The deposition of Hilarinus of Ostia is recorded against 16 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 654), but, outside the present *passio*, is otherwise unknown. See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, pp. 104–5, and BSS VII, col. 712 [A. Amore].

⁴³ On the endowment of a church in Ostia by someone named Gallicanus, see the entry for Pope Sylvester in the *Liber pontificalis*, quoted above, n. 3.

⁴⁴ Franchi de'Cavalieri suggested (rather improbably) that *Laurentia* refers not to a church of St Laurence, but to the town of *Laurento* (modern Tučepi) on the Dalmatian coast ('Del testo della *Passio* SS. *Iohannis et Pauli*', p. 62). But in the present context it seems more likely that the reference is to Roman *Laurentum* or *Vicus Augustanus Laurentium* (modern Castelporziano),

the bishopric, he did not give his consent, but at his own wish chose who (else) was to be ordained. God bestowed such grace on him that those who were possessed by demons, as soon as they had been seen by him, were straightway cleansed; and there were many other signs of holiness in him.

7. But when Julian had been made Caesar by Constantius,⁴⁵ he promulgated a law that Christians were to own nothing in this world. Then Gallicanus, who owned four houses in the vicinity of Ostia, whose rents he used for those good works which I mentioned, had God as his protector to such a degree that whosoever entered them either to lay claim to their revenues or to collect rents, was immediately filled with the devil; and whosoever was the tax-gatherer (for these properties) became afflicted with leprosy. When these demons had been interrogated about the matter, they gave the reply that unless Gallicanus was compelled to sacrifice, those persons collecting his taxes could not avoid such dangers. And because no one dared to summon Gallicanus in respect of this crime, Julian the Caesar sent an order, saying: 'Either sacrifice to the gods, or leave Italy.' Straightway abandoning all his properties, he sought Alexandria, and he joined a Christian community for a whole year. Afterwards he even went to the desert; and there, when he was compelled to sacrifice and refused to do so, he was killed by a sword to the heart by Raucianus, the custodian of the temples (*comes templorum*), and thus became a Christian martyr. And so he proceeded to the Lord rejoicing in triumph. They immediately built a basilica in his name in which the martyr's blessings abound.

8. But Hilarinus, the man of God who had received Gallicanus at Ostia, when he was compelled by the persecutors of the Christian faith to sacrifice, and refused, was beaten to death with staves and received the palm of martyrdom. The Christians buried his body reverently in Ostia.

9. However, Julian Caesar, with wicked avarice, tinged his acquisitiveness with the testimony of the gospel: for, as he was taking property and inheritances away from the Christians, he used to say, 'Our Christ says in the gospel, "Whoever does not renounce everything he possesses, cannot be my disciple".'⁴⁶ It came to his notice that Paul and John were providing daily sustenance for crowds of poor persons from the wealth which Constantia, the holy virgin of Christ, had left to them. And he sent officers who would arrest them, saying that they ought to show loyalty to him. But they said:

on the Tyrrhenian coast, some six miles south of Ostia, where the Via Laurentina from Rome reaches the sea; see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, p. 48, and *Rome, Portus and the Mediterranean*, ed. S. Keay (London, 2012), p. 49. *Laurentum* had its own martyr-church dedicated to St Hedistus; see F. Savio, 'S. Edisto od Oreste e compagni martiri di Laurento', *Römische Quartalschrift* 29 (1915), 29–53, 121–40, and 250–9, and Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 102–3.

⁴⁵ Julian (Flavius Claudius Iulianus) was made Caesar by Constantius in 355; see *PLRE* I, p. 477.

⁴⁶ Luke 14: 33.

‘When the holy Christian emperors of august memory, Constantine and Constans, and their nephew Constantius,⁴⁷ adorned the summit of imperial distinction and rejoiced to be servants of Christ, we used to obey their commands. When they went to church, they took off the imperial diadem and prostrated themselves flat on the ground in order to worship God. Afterwards, however, the world was not worthy to have such emperors, and the heavens received them as angels; Constantius, the nephew of Constantine, succeeded them;⁴⁸ from the time when he bestowed on you the throne of the empire, you have abandoned a religion filled with miraculous powers, and (yet) you follow that which you know full well cannot be accommodated by God. As a result of this wickedness we cease from formal attendance (on your person), and withdraw ourselves entirely from the fellowship of your imperial majesty; for we are not false, but true, Christians.’

10. Julian sent this reply: ‘I, too, obtained a (minor) clerical rank. And if I had wished to proceed to the highest ranks of the church hierarchy, I could have done so.’⁴⁹ But regarding it as vain to pursue idleness and pleasure, having put aside necessary and useful activities, I gave my attention to warlike activities and sacrificed to the gods who supported them, so that I might attain to the highest imperial office. Nevertheless you ought to consider—you who were brought up in the imperial household—that you should not leave my service, so that I can retain you as the head of my palace staff. Because if I should be scorned by you, it is necessary for me to act so that I am not scorned.’ Then Paul and John said: ‘We do not intend any insult to you, in that we prefer any human being whatsoever to you. We prefer to you the Lord “Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things which are in them”.’⁵⁰ We do not fear your enmity as a mortal man, lest we incur the enmity of the eternal God. Therefore we wish you to know that we shall never be in formal attendance on you, never worship your cult, and never come to your palace.’

11. Julian said to them: ‘Ten days’ truce are granted by me so that, ordering your minds with wiser advice, you will hasten to come back to me, not under compulsion but willingly. But if you decline to do this, you will be compelled thereafter to do what you do not willingly care to do.’ Paul and John replied: ‘Make it happen today as if the last day of the truce had passed, and that you

⁴⁷ There is confusion here: the text states that Constantius was the ‘nephew’ of Constantine and Constans (*eorum nepos Constantius*). He was in fact the *son* of Constantine, and the brother of Constans. Possibly the usage here is to be understood as meaning simply ‘descendant’ (as the word is used by poets; it is unfortunate that *TLL* is not available for the letter N).

⁴⁸ Again, Constantius was not the nephew of Constantine, but his son. The family relationships are clearly shown in *PLRE* I, p. 1129 (Stemma 2). The text should probably read *filius*, not *nepos*; but see previous note.

⁴⁹ This statement is pure fiction: no ancient source indicates that Julian was ever a cleric in minor orders.

⁵⁰ Acts 4: 24.

were therefore about to implement what you are threatening to do after ten days.' Julian said: 'You think that the Christians make martyrs of you.' And when he had said this he got up in a rage, saying, 'When the tenth day has passed, I will have you come willingly to me as friends; but if you do not come, I will punish you as public enemies.'

12. Then SS. John and Paul disposed of all the things which they had to leave to the Christians who came to them; and after devoting themselves ceaselessly to almsgiving by day and night throughout the entire ten days, on the tenth day they were both placed under house arrest. Terentianus the drill-master (*campidoctor*)⁵¹ was sent to them with his soldiers at dinner-time. Entering, he found them praying, and said to them: 'Our emperor Julian has sent to you a little gold statue of Jupiter, so that you may worship it and burn incense to him. If you will not do this, you will both die by the sword. It is not fitting that you two, who have been raised in the palace, should be killed in public.'

13. John and Paul said: 'If Julian is your lord and master, share your lot with your lord. For us there is no other Lord but the one God, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, whom he (Julian) was not afraid to deny. And because he has once been cast from the face of God, he wishes to take others with him to perdition.' While they were saying these and many similar things, and Terentianus was urging them to worship Jupiter and to burn some tit-bits, the third hour of the night passed by; and wishing to please Julian in the way that had been requested of him, namely that he should punish them without any uproar of gossip, he had a pit dug within their house.⁵² And when he had ordered them to be beheaded, he immediately ordered their bodies to be wrapped up and placed (in the pit), circulating the rumour that at the emperor's command they had been sent into exile. No trace of their execution was to be found on earth.

14. Immediately thereafter Julian was killed in battle with the Persians;⁵³ and when Jovian became emperor,⁵⁴ churches were opened up and the Christian religion began to flourish. Inside the house of Paul and John demons were expelled from the bodies of those possessed, demons which attested to their holy martyrdom, such that the only son of Terentianus, who had decapitated them, came into the house of the saints one night, and a demon shouted out that Paul and John were burning him. Then Terentianus himself

⁵¹ On the role of the drill-master (*campidoctor*), see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 634 and 675.

⁵² On the *domus* which has been recovered by excavation beneath the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelian Hill, see F. Astolfi, 'Domus SS. Iohannis et Pauli', *LTUR* II, pp. 117–18 and fig. 38, and n. 13 above.

⁵³ On Julian's death while on campaign in Persia, on 26 June 363, see *PLRE* I, pp. 477–8. The principal source for his death is Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxv. 3. 23.

⁵⁴ Jovian (not Jovinian!) was emperor for a very brief period, from 27 June 363 until 17 February 364; see *PLRE* I, p. 461. Mombricitus gives this emperor's name as *Iovinianus*.

came and threw himself down on his face, shouting out that he had unknowingly done something as a pagan, that he had only carried out the Caesar's orders. Whence it came about that, having given his name, on the day before Easter [Holy Saturday] he received the grace of Christ; when he had done this and had repented after his baptism, he <came>⁵⁵ praying and weeping intently to that place in which the bodies of the saints were lying. His son was cleansed of demons by God's saints, and this account of the martyrdom of the saints was taken down in dictation from Terentianus himself: to the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Ghost forever and ever.

APPENDIX

THE MARTYRDOM OF SS. JOHN AND PAUL IN RECENSION B (*BHL* 3242)

1. And therefore, after the emperor Constantine passed on to the heavens, and his daughter Constantina followed him,⁵⁶ when the wicked Julian, the nephew of Constantine, had been made emperor by Constantius,⁵⁷ he was seized by the desire for wealth, by confiscating the patrimonies of Christians.⁵⁸ He used to say, 'Your Christ says in the gospels, "None of you can be my disciple without giving up all that he owns".'⁵⁹ It came to his notice that Paul and John were providing daily sustenance for a crowd of Christians out of the riches which the most holy virgin Constantina had left them; and he sent men to bring them to him, saying that they ought to show more loyalty to him. But they said, 'When those devout Christians—Constantine of august memory, and Constans, and their nephew Constantius⁶⁰—adorned the summit of august authority, and rejoiced to be the servants of Christ, we used to obey their commands. They went to church, taking off the diadems from their own heads and worshipping God, by lying face down on the ground. Thereafter, however, the world was not worthy to have such emperors, and the heavens received them among the angels. The nephew of Constantine [i.e. Constantius] remained; from the time when he entrusted to you the throne of the empire, you have abandoned a religion filled with

⁵⁵ Supplying *uenit*.

⁵⁶ Constantine (I) 'the Great' died in 337, his daughter Constantina in 354. Note that the redactor of Recension B has corrected the erroneous form *Constantia* to *Constantina* (but in other respects he failed to correct the erroneous genealogy of Constantine given in Recension A; see n. 60).

⁵⁷ Constantius on his deathbed named Julian as his successor; see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxi. 15. 2.

⁵⁸ The first sentence of c. 1 ('And therefore . . . patrimonies of Christians') is based on c. 7 of Redaction A.

⁵⁹ Luke 14: 33.

⁶⁰ The author has taken over from Recension A the statement that Constantius was the nephew (*nepos*) of Constantine and Constans; see n. 47.

miraculous powers; and (yet) you follow those (practices) which you full well know cannot be accommodated by God in any way. Because of this wickedness we cease from formal attendance (on your person) and withdraw ourselves from the fellowship of your imperial majesty: for we are not false, but true, Christians.⁶¹

2. Julian sent word to them: 'I, too, obtained a (minor) clerical rank in the Church and could, if I had wished, have risen to the highest grade. But I considered it pointless, having abandoned all necessary and useful business, to follow idleness and pleasure, and (so) I applied my mind to warlike activities, and sacrificed to the gods who supported them, so that I might arrive at the highest imperial office. Accordingly, you ought to consider that the imperial palace raised you: for that reason you ought not to leave my side, so I can retain you as the head of my palace staff. Because if I should be scorned by you, it will be necessary for me to act in such a way that I am not (seen to be) scorned.' Then John and Paul said: 'We do not intend any insult to you, in that we prefer any human being to you; we prefer God to you, Who made heaven and earth and sea and all things which are in them. Let men of this temporal world fear your enmity: we are afraid lest we incur the enmity of the eternal God. And therefore we wish you to know that we shall never come over to emperor worship, nor come to your palace.'⁶² Julian sent back the reply: 'A truce of ten days is granted by me to you so that, ordering your minds with wiser advice, you will hasten to come back to me, not under compulsion but willingly. But if you decline to do this, you will then be compelled to do those things which you do not care willingly to do.' Paul and John said: 'Reckon that the ten days' truce has passed, and therefore do today what you threaten to do after ten days.' Julian said: 'You think that the Christians will make you out to be martyrs.' And when he had said these things, he got up in a rage, saying: 'If when the tenth day has passed you come willingly to me, I will have you as my friends; but if you do not come, I will punish you as public enemies.'⁶³

3. Then the holy men, John and Paul, sent a message and asked Crispus the priest, and Crispinianus his cleric, and Benedicta, a venerable woman, to come to them;⁶⁴ they related to them everything which had happened, and they celebrated mass in their house and participated in communion. Inviting (other) Christians to come to them, they put in order everything which they could leave behind, and for all the ten days they occupied themselves continually by day and night with alms-giving; and on the eleventh day they were placed in fetters in their own house. When Crispus the priest heard that John and Paul were confined in their own house, he came to them with Crispinianus and Benedicta in order to comfort them. When they arrived there, they were not permitted to enter, or to see them, or to speak to them.⁶⁵ Then at that same moment Terentianus the drill-master was sent there with his soldiers; he entered at dinner-time and found them praying. Terentianus said to them: 'Our lord Julian the

⁶¹ The remainder of c. 1 (from 'He used to say' to 'not false, but true, Christians') is from c. 9 of Recension A.

⁶² The first part of c. 2 ('Julian sent word' to 'nor come to your palace') is from c. 10 of Recension A.

⁶³ The latter part of c. 2 ('Julian sent back the reply' to 'punish you as public enemies') is from c. 11 of Recension A.

⁶⁴ On SS. Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta, see BSS IV, cols. 319–20 [A. Amore].

⁶⁵ The first part of c. 3, concerning Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta (as far as 'were not permitted to enter . . . or to speak to them'), has no correlate in Recension A.

emperor has sent a little golden statue used by worshippers of Jupiter,⁶⁶ so that you may adore it, and burn incense; if you will not do this, we will strike down both of you with the sword. For it is not fitting that you, who have been raised in the palace, be killed in public.⁶⁷ John and Paul said: 'If Julian is your lord, keep your part of the bargain with your lord; our Lord is none other than the One God, Son and Holy Spirit, whom he [Julian] did not fear to reject; and because he has once been cast off from the face of God, he wishes to bring others with him to perdition.'⁶⁸

4. With them saying these and similar things, Terentianus was urging them to worship Jupiter and to burn incense. When the third hour of the night had passed, Terentianus, wishing to please Julian in the way that had been requested of him, had them [John and Paul] silently punished; and he ordered a pit to be dug in their house, in which he had ordered them to be decapitated, and he ordered them to be wrapped up and placed in it, circulating the rumour that at the command of the emperor they had been sent into exile; for no sign of their murder was found above ground.⁶⁹ But Crispus the priest and Crispinianus and Benedicta were lamenting in their own house, and were praying (to God) that He would reveal some sign to them concerning the holy martyrs. And God revealed it to them. Then Julian, in a rage, ordered them to be arrested, and to undergo capital punishment. The priests John and Pigenius, and Flavian, an illustrious senator (*vir illustris*) and a former urban prefect,⁷⁰ secretly carried away their bodies, and buried them in the house of John and Paul, not far from their own house.

5. Then the only son of Terentianus, who had killed them that night, came into the house of the saints John and Paul; and a demon began to shout out through his mouth that Paul and John were burning him. Then Terentianus, arriving there, threw himself on his face, shouting out that he had not known what he had done, that as a thorough pagan he had obeyed the order of the emperor. Whence it came about that, having given his name, on the day before Easter he received the grace of Christ [i.e. was baptized on Holy Saturday]. When he had done this, and had repented, following his baptism he devoutly prayed and wept at the place where the bodies of the saints were hidden, and his son was cured by the saints of God.⁷¹

6. This was written with Terentianus himself narrating the martyrdom of the saints. Not many days later this Terentianus, together with his son, was beheaded by Julian himself. The priests John and Pigenius took their bodies and placed them in the same house of John and Paul. As soon as Julian engaged in war in Persia, he was killed there. Afterwards Jovian, a man who was thoroughly Christian, assumed the purple: he

⁶⁶ No nominative form *Iovianus* is recorded in *TLL*; my translation 'worshippers of Jupiter' is a guess from context.

⁶⁷ These three sentences ('Then at that same moment Terentianus' to 'be killed in public') are taken from c. 12 of Recension A.

⁶⁸ The last part of c. 3 ('John and Paul said' to 'with him to perdition') are from c. 13 of Recension A.

⁶⁹ The first part of c. 4 ('With them saying these' to 'was found above ground') is from c. 13 of Recension A. The remainder of c. 4 has no correlate in Recension A.

⁷⁰ The only urban prefect named Flavianus who is attested for the late third or first half of the fourth centuries was one Iunius Flavianus, who was prefect in 311–12: see *PLRE* I, pp. 344 and 1053.

⁷¹ The entirety of c. 5 is taken from c. 14 of Redaction A; the final chapter (c. 6) of Redaction B, with the exception of the statements concerning the death of Julian in Persia and the succession of Jovian, has no correlate in Redaction A.

was a friend of John and Paul. At that same time churches were opened and the Christian religion began to flourish. Then the emperor Jovian summoned Byzantius the senator and asked him to come to him;⁷² he spoke to him thus: 'We sent for you through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it was revealed to us concerning Crispus the priest and Crispinianus and Benedicta, that Julian had killed them, and their bodies were buried in the house of SS. John and Paul.'⁷³ I ask, therefore, that you actively look for the bodies of SS. John and Paul.' And when Byzantius, together with his son Pammachius,⁷⁴ had certainly located them, giving thanks to God he announced this to Jovian the emperor. Thanking them, Jovian gave orders as follows: 'Almighty God has granted us a great bounty. Take this advice: make use of the saints of the Lord, and have a church built in the house of these saints.'⁷⁵ And when Byzantius had begun to do this, the demons began to reveal (the place of) their holy martyrdom: (all) to the praise of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

⁷² The character of Byzantius the senator has been fabricated from the fact that, by the end of the fifth century, the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo was known as the *titulus Vizantis*: see n. 7. No senator named Byzantius (or Byza(n)s) is attested in *PLRE* I.

⁷³ The deposition of SS. Crispus and Crispinianus is recorded against 27 June in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 654). This feast day immediately (and suspiciously) follows that of SS. John and Paul on 26 June.

⁷⁴ On Pammachius, see n. 10.

⁷⁵ On the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, see above, nn. 12–13.

XIX

SS. Processus and Martinianus

c.500 × 550; relevant to a basilica and cemetery (unidentified) at the second mile of the Via Aurelia

According to the present *passio*, Processus and Martinianus were two officers who, during the principate of Nero, were charged with overseeing the detention of the apostles Peter and Paul in prison, but who were converted to Christianity by Peter and subsequently executed.¹ The narrative is as follows. During the principate of Nero, when Simon Magus crashed to the ground, the apostles SS. Peter and Paul were handed over to Paulinus, the Master of the Offices, who put them in the Mamertine prison, where they were guarded by Processus and Martinianus (c. 1). When they saw the miracles which the apostles were performing, Processus and Martinianus informed them that Nero had forgotten about them, and that they were free to leave the prison; at the same time, they asked to be baptized (c. 2). St Peter told them to believe with all their heart; meanwhile, he caused a fountain to spring from the rock of the prison walls, in order to provide the water necessary for the baptisms (c. 3). Processus and Martinianus were duly baptized, along with forty-seven other prisoners, and then Peter set off for the Via Appia, but on the way Christ appeared to him in a vision, and he asked Christ, 'My Lord, where are You going?' (*Domine quo vadis*), to which Christ replied that He was returning to Rome to be crucified again, and so Peter likewise returned to Rome (c. 4). It was reported to Paulinus that Processus and Martinianus had become Christians; they were arraigned before Paulinus (c. 5). When asked, they refused to sacrifice, and so they were beaten at length (c. 6). When they continued to refuse to sacrifice, more tortures were applied (c. 7). A Roman matron named Lucina comforted them while they were being tortured; Paulinus meanwhile lost the sight of one eye, and then died three

¹ Listed *BHL* 6947 and *CPL* 2223; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 170–1, 303–5, and 328–9; Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Come i SS. Processo e Martiniano divennero i carcerieri?', pp. 35–9; *idem*, 'Della custodia Mamertini', pp. 1–52; *DACL* XIV/2, cols. 1890–4 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* X, cols. 1138–40 [A. Amore]; Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', pp. 353–73; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 216–23.

days later; Processus and Martinianus were taken back to the Mamertine prison, where Lucina continued to comfort them (c. 8). Nero gave orders for the saints to be executed; they were taken out to the aqueduct on the Via Aurelia and beheaded (c. 9). Lucina recovered their bodies and buried them in a catacomb on her estate on the Via Aurelia (c. 10).

The author of the present *passio*, writing probably at some point during the first half of the sixth century, inherited a tradition about SS. Processus and Martinianus which was a century old, if not older. In his *Praedestinatus* [CPL 243], composed at Rome c.430, Arnobius the Younger described Processus and Martinianus as two brothers who were said to be 'Phrygians',² by which he probably meant that they were members of a community of Montanists in residence on the Via Aurelia.³ The next reference to the martyrs occurs in c. 5 of the apocryphal Acts of St Peter (*Martyrium beati Petri apostoli*) of pseudo-Linus [BHL 6655], where it is stated that Processus and Martinianus were prison warders who as *magistriani* had been charged by Paulinus, a senator of the clarissimate, with overseeing the custody of St Peter during his incarceration in the Mamertine prison.⁴ These pseudo-Linus Acts of St Peter were composed at some point in the earlier sixth century;⁵ since they were evidently laid under contribution by the author of the present *passio*, they supply a helpful *terminus post quem* for the composition of this *passio*.⁶ The author of the *passio* ignores the information which he might have gleaned from the *Praedestinatus* of Arnobius, but expands that found in the apocryphal Acts of St Peter, by

² *Praedestinatus* i. 86: 'Quod dum impetrasset a tyranno Maximo, sanctorum nostrorum exclusit locum, id est duorum fratrum Processi et Martiniani, dicens eos Phryges fuisse, et ideo hanc legem tenuisse quam Tertullianus, atque hoc ordine per occasionem martyrum Dei populum seducebat' (CCSL XXV B, pp. 49–50). The statement that the brothers were 'Phrygians' and therefore held to the same 'rule' (*legem*) as Tertullian, implies that they were Montanists, not that they were natives of Phrygia; see the following note.

³ See Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', p. 72, and A. Ferrua, 'Di una comunità montanista sull'Aurelia alla fine del IV secolo', *La civiltà cattolica* 87/2 (1936), 216–27. Montanus was a Phrygian prophet who revealed himself during the years 155–60, and claimed that the Paraclete was incarnate in him. His followers were called Montanists, and the cult spread from Phrygia to the West, becoming established in Rome by 177–8, and being adopted by Tertullian in 207 (see (briefly) *EEC* I, pp. 570–1, and Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 404–10). Whether Montanism was still an active cult in the early sixth century is unclear, and probably unlikely.

⁴ *Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum*, c. 5: 'Sed custodes carceris, Processus et Martinianus, cum reliquis magistrianis et ex officio iunctis [*leg. functis*] postulabant eum, dicentes: "Domine, quo uis abscede, quia imperatorem oblitum tui iam credimus... Si enim regis iussio te impeteret, Paulini, uiri clarissimi, cui te commendatum nos custodiendum suscepimus, de tua nece sententiam haberemus"' (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I, p. 6).

⁵ See G. N. Verrando, 'Osservazioni sulla collocazione cronologica degli apocrifi Atti di Pietro dello Pseudo-Lino', *Vetera Christianorum* 20 (1983), 391–426.

⁶ On the debt of the present *passio* to the pseudo-Linus Acts of St Peter, see Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', esp. pp. 353–7, followed by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 218–21.

shifting the focus of attention from the apostle to the two prison warders, who are described as having been converted to Christianity by the example of St Peter. The first three chapters of the *passio* are based on the pseudo-Linus Acts of St Peter; but thereafter (cc. 4–10) the author develops his own narrative of the martyrs' arrest and eventual execution. The conversion of Processus and Martinianus brings them to the attention of Paulinus, a character taken over from the pseudo-Linus text, who in these apocryphal acts had been described simply as a senator of the clarissimate (*vir clarissimus*); he is now described as occupying the more prestigious post of Master of the Offices. Inasmuch as they were *magistriani* (as in the pseudo-Linus text), Paulinus was their superior. As Master of the Offices, hence a member (*comes*) of the imperial *comitium*, he was empowered to bring them to trial and to judge their case.⁷ They were accordingly tried and sentenced to severe torture; but while they were being tortured, Paulinus himself suffered an eye injury, and died three days later, whereupon Nero issued the order that they [Processus and Martinianus] were to be executed. The author describes the site of their execution—at the aqueduct on the Via Aurelia—and their burial in a nearby catacomb on the estate of the matron Lucina, who had recovered their bodies. This information makes it possible to identify the aqueduct as the Aqua Traiana, which did indeed terminate in a cistern adjacent to the Via Aurelia. Unfortunately, however, the cemetery on the Via Aurelia, where they are said to have been buried and which, according to the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, was at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, has never been satisfactorily identified, although there have been many detailed topographical studies of the area and many suggested identifications.⁸

Text. The *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus enjoyed fairly wide circulation, if not perhaps as extensive as that of (for example) the *passiones* of Sebastian and Agnes: the Bollandists' *BHLms* lists some 100 manuscripts, to which Cécile Lanéry added about twenty-five more: a total of some 125

⁷ In legislation passed in 331, Constantine empowered certain members of the *comitium* (the praetorian prefect, deputies, and other *comites*) to judge imperial *cognitiones*: see the valuable discussion by Peachin, *Iudex vice Caesaris*, pp. 191–4. So in the present case, the Master of the Offices, who was a senior member of the *comitium*, would certainly have had the authority to preside as judge over *cognitiones*. But it is an absurd anachronism to suggest that the post of Master of the Offices existed in the first century AD, or that such a magistrate had the authority to act as judge on the emperor's behalf.

⁸ See Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 71–6; Silvagni, 'La topografia cimiteriale della Via Aurelia', pp. 103–18; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 70–3; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 187–8; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 165–6; Verrando, 'Note di topografia martiriale'; *idem*, 'Analisi topografica degli antichi cimiteri'; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 240–1; A. M. Nieddu, 'SS. Processi et Martiniani ecclesia, basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 271–2; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 257–9.

manuscripts in all.⁹ The best edition of the *passio* is that of Franchi de'Cavalieri, who collated seven manuscripts dating from the ninth century to the twelfth. His text is apparently sound and presents no textual difficulties, and it is his text which is translated here. The chapter divisions are my own.

1. At the time when Simon Magus crashed down,¹⁰ the wicked Nero¹¹ handed the blessed apostles of Christ, Peter, and Paul, over to Paulinus, a senator of the clarissimate (*vir clarissimus*)¹² having authority as Master of the Offices (*magisteriae potestatis*); at that same time Paulinus committed the blessed apostles to custody in the Mamertine prison.¹³ And many infirm Christians were coming to them there and were being cured of their illnesses, and others possessed by demons were freed through the prayers of the apostles. There were many soldiers who kept guard over the blessed apostles;

⁹ Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 217–18.

¹⁰ Although Simon Magus is mentioned in biblical Acts (8: 9–25), the story of his death is told only in later, apocryphal, acts of the apostles, in this case, the *Passio SS. apostolorum Petri et Pauli* [BHL 6657], c. 56, where it is related that while Simon was attempting to demonstrate, by flying aloft, the superiority of his magic to St Peter's miraculous Christian powers, St Peter cursed the demon that was inhabiting Simon and caused it to depart; whereupon Simon crashed to the ground and was killed (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I, p. 167: 'et continuo dimissus [sc. daemon] cecidit in locum qui Via Sacra dicitur, et in quattuor partes fractus...'). Although the reference to Simon's death is unambiguous, the meaning of the words *crepuit intus* in the present text is far from clear, and one suspects that they have been influenced by the account of the death of Judas in biblical Acts, who burst open, spilling his entrails (Acts 1: 18: *crepuit medius*). On *crepo* meaning 'to crash down', see the intransitive uses recorded in TLL IV, cols. 1172–3 (*de rebus corrutibus*, and *cum sonitu interire*), esp. Seneca, *Thyestes* 264 ('ac totis domus ut fracta tectis crepuit'), and Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei* ii. 574 ('vincula rumpuntur, cecidit crepuitque cadaver').

¹¹ Nero was emperor from AD 54 to 68. St Peter was thought to have been martyred during the reign of Nero, probably in the purge of Christians which followed the fire of Rome, as described by Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 44), and repeated by later historians, such as Orosius, *Hist. aduersum paganos* vii. 7. 10 (CSEL V, pp. 454–5). On the martyrdom of St Peter at Rome, probably by being burned alive, see Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 3–9.

¹² As Master of the Offices (*magister officiorum*), Paulinus was a count (*comes*) of the imperial council (*comitium* or *consistorium*) (Jones, *LRE*, p. 333); as such he was the head of the palatine civil service and had under his supervision the *agentes in rebus*, the *sacra scrinia*, etc.: see *ibid.* pp. 368–9, as well as Boak, 'The Master of the Offices in the Later Roman and Byzantine Empires', in Boak and Dunlap, *Two Studies*, pp. 1–160, esp. 24–33 (the establishment of the office) and 33–48 (the Mastership of the Offices from AD 337 to 600), and esp. Clauss, *Der magister officiorum in der Spätantike*, pp. 15–59 (all the departments which were under the supervision of the Master of the Offices), and 60–98 (his various official functions). The prestigious position of *magister officiorum* carried with it the rank of *vir illustris* (Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9). The author of the present *passio* took over from the pseudo-Linus Acts of St Peter the statement that Paulinus belonged to the clarissimate (*vir clarissimus*), without realizing that a Master of the Offices would have been of illustrious rank, a *vir illustris*, i.e. of higher rank than the clarissimate. In any case, this is all anachronistic in a first-century context: the post of Master of Offices, the *comitium* itself, and its members (*comites*), were first established by Constantine.

¹³ The Mamertine prison, adapted from tufa quarries in the Capitoline Hill, was the oldest prison in Rome; see no. X (p. 266, n. 40).

among these were two senior agents of the Master of the Offices (*melloprincipes*¹⁴ *magistriani*¹⁵), Processus and Martinianus.

2. When they saw the miracles which the Lord Jesus Christ performed through the blessed apostles, they began to marvel, saying, 'Reverend men, you realize that the emperor Nero has now forgotten entirely about your presence here: for it is nine months that you have been in prison. We therefore ask you to walk wherever you wish; only just baptize us in the name of Him through Whom we see you performing these great miracles.'

3. Then the blessed apostles, Peter along with Paul, said to them: 'Believe with all your heart and mind in the name of the Trinity, and you yourselves can do the things which you see us doing.' When all those who were in prison heard this, they shouted out in one voice, saying, 'Give us some water, because we are in danger of (dying of) thirst.' At that same hour St Peter the apostle, while still in the Mamertine prison, said to them all: 'Believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only-begotten Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and everything will be provided for you.' At that same time they all threw themselves headlong at the feet of the apostles, asking to receive baptism from them. And indeed the blessed apostles prayed in that same prison. And when they had finished their prayers, and when St Peter the apostle had made the sign of the Cross on the Tarpeian Hill, in the Mamertine prison, at that same time water flowed from the Hill.¹⁶

4. Then Processus and Martinianus, the senior agents of the Master of the Offices (*melloprincipes magistriani*), were baptized by St Peter the apostle. And when all those who were in prison saw this, they threw themselves at the feet

¹⁴ The word *melloprinceps* is not recorded in *TLL* or in Blaise; presumably it is a hybrid, on the model of the word *melloproximus* (on which see *TLL* VIII, col. 623), of Latin *princeps* and Greek μέλλο- ('about to become', 'future'), meaning a senior civil servant in line to become a *princeps*, the highest-ranking secretary in the Master's *officium*; cf. Giardina, 'Magistriani immaginari', p. 401. On the term *magistriani* used to mean *agentes in rebus*, that is, agents of the imperial secret service, see Clauss, *Der magister officiorum*, pp. 24–5 and Giardina, *ibid.* esp. p. 398; it is possible, therefore, that Processus and Martinianus are in fact being conceived as *agentes in rebus*, and were assigned by Paulinus to keep an eye (and to inform) on St Peter while he was in prison. (On *agentes in rebus* as imperial spies, see also Jones, *LRE*, pp. 103–4.) This suggestion is plausible, insofar as *agentes in rebus* were under the supervision of the Master of the Offices; but there is nothing in the text to confirm or confute it. It is also the case that *agentes in rebus* did not normally serve as prison warders (possibly the author of the *passio* has misunderstood their function, as he has misunderstood the terminology for this department of the imperial bureaucracy); see Giardina, *ibid.* pp. 400–1.

¹⁵ The term *magistriani* (literally 'the Master's men') originated as an informal expression used to describe civil servants and staff members of the Master of Offices; see Jones, *LRE*, p. 578, and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, p. 29; but by the late fourth century the term had come to be synonymous with *agentes in rebus*: Clauss, *Der magister officiorum*, pp. 24–5, as well as Giardina, 'Magistriani immaginari', p. 398.

¹⁶ The name 'Tarpeian Hill' (*Mons Tarpeius*) is an earlier name for the Capitoline Hill; see Platner–Ashby, pp. 509–10; Richardson, p. 378; and T. P. Wiseman, 'Saxum Tarpeium', *LTUR* IV, pp. 237–8 with fig. 114. In the Mamertine prison, as it has been preserved and as it may be visited today, there is a circular well which allegedly derives from the spring produced by St Peter.

of St Peter the apostle, and forty-seven people of both sexes and of different ages were baptized. Then he offered on their behalf the 'sacrifice of praise' [i.e. celebrated mass], and they all partook of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing this, Processus and Martinianus, the agents of the Master of the Offices, said to the holy apostles Peter and Paul: 'Go wherever you wish, because Nero, having forgotten, has given up on you.' Leaving the prison, the holy apostles Peter and Paul came to the road which is called the Via Appia, and they went as far as the Appian Gate. Then, because St Peter had a damaged shin-bone as a result of the iron shackles, his leg-bandage fell off near the Septizodium¹⁷ on the Via Nova.¹⁸ At that same time he came up to the Porta Appia, and he saw the Lord Jesus Christ; recognizing Him, Peter said to Him: 'My Lord, where are You going?'; and the Lord, 'I am returning to Rome to be crucified once again; as for you, go back to Rome.'¹⁹ And Peter went back to Rome. And when he went back in the morning, soldiers in the service of the Master of the Offices (*milites magistriani*) arrested him.

5. At that same time it was reported to Paulinus, a senator of the clarissimate (*vir clarissimus*) who was Master of the Offices (*magister officii*),²⁰ that Processus and Martinianus, both of them agents of the Master of the Offices,

¹⁷ It is probable that the transmitted form *septemsonium* is an error for Septizodium, a building erected by Septimius Severus in AD 203, at the south-east corner of the Palatine facing towards the approach from the Via Appia; see Platner-Ashby, pp. 473–5; Richardson, p. 350; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 144–5 with fig. 59; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, p. 155; and G. Pisani Sartorio, 'Septizonium, Septizodium, Septisolum (2)', *LTUR* IV, pp. 269–72, with fig. 123. The building was intended to serve as a monumental façade at this corner of the Palatine; it was demolished in 1588. It has also been suggested that St Peter's leg-bandage (*fasciola*) supplied the name for the nearby *titulus Fasciolae*, a *titulus*-church subsequently known as the basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus.

¹⁸ For the Via Nova, see Platner-Ashby, p. 565; Richardson, p. 417; and J. R. Patterson, 'Via Nova', *LTUR* V, pp. 142–3. It was a street constructed by Caracalla, which ran parallel to the Via Appia, along the front of the *Thermae Antoniniana* [i.e. Baths of Caracalla]; it may originally have been conceived by Septimius Severus as an approach to his Septizodium (see previous note). It is mentioned in a Christian inscription (*CIL* VI, no. 9684).

¹⁹ This famous story ('Domine quo vadis') is taken from the apocryphal Acts of Peter by the pseudo-Linus [*Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum*: BHL 6655], c. 6: 'profectus est solus [sc. Petrus]. Et dum pergeret, ceciderunt illi fasciamenta ex crure demolita a compede. Vt autem portam ciuitatis uoluit egredi, uidit sibi Christum occurrere. Et adorans eum ait: "Domine quo uadis?" Respondit ei Christus: "Romam uenio iterum crucifigi"' (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I, p. 7). It will be seen that the wording of the present *passio*—'dum tibiam demolitam haberet de compede ferri, cecidit ei fasciola'—was prompted by that of the apocryphal Acts (note esp. *demolita/demolitam, fasciamenta/fasciola*).

²⁰ The author of the *passio* has managed to get the title of this very senior magistrate wrong (it is correctly *magister officiorum*, 'Master of the Offices' (plural)); cf. Clauss, *Der magister officiorum, passim*, and Giardina, 'Magistriani immaginari', p. 400, n. 36. The reference to a *magister officiorum* in the principate of Nero is in any case a gross anachronism: the post was created by Constantine (or possibly earlier by Diocletian), and the earliest attested *magister officiorum* was a man named—perhaps significantly—Martinianus under Licinius (307–24); see Boak, *The Master of the Offices*, pp. 24–33; *PLRE* I, pp. 1059–60; and Clauss, *Der magister officiorum*, pp. 116–24. Boak (*ibid.* pp. 148–51) provides a list of all attested Masters of the Offices, which does not include anyone called Paulinus; but cf. the more detailed list of all

had become Christians. Then he sent soldiers and arrested them, and ordered them to be placed in prison. On another day he ordered them to be brought before him. When they were brought into the presence of Paulinus, a man of the clarissimate, he said to them: 'Are you so stupid that, abandoning the gods and goddesses, whom the unconquerable emperors worship, and whom our ancient tradition reveres, you follow fruitless pursuits in your audacity, such that you reject the oaths of your military service?' Martinianus replied in a clear voice, and said: 'We now begin to follow the oaths of heavenly soldiery.' Paulinus, the senatorial nobleman (*vir clarissimus*) and Master of the Offices (*magister officii*), said: 'Lay aside the insanity of your minds and worship the immortal gods, whom you have venerated since your childhood, and have worshipped, and by whom you have been raised.'

6. The blessed martyrs Processus and Martinianus, replying in one voice, said: 'We have become Christians.' Paulinus the senator said once again to them: 'Listen to me, comrades, and do the things I say and be my friends and enjoy your military service, and become outstanding leaders. Sacrifice to the omnipotent gods, in other words, and go on living.' The two of them, replying together as if from the one mouth, said to him: 'Let it suffice to declare to you that we are true Christians and servants of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom His blessed apostles, Peter along with Paul, have proclaimed.' Accordingly Paulinus, the Master of the Offices and a senator, said: 'I have told you, and you have listened, and again I say to you: hear my advice and go on living.' But they remained silent. Again and again Paulinus the senator questioned them, and then he ordered that their mouths be smashed with a stone. And when they had been beaten at length, they both shouted out in unison, 'Glory be to God on high.'

7. Paulinus, the senator of the clarissimate (*vir clarissimus*) and Master of the Offices (*magister officiorum*), said to his soldiers: 'Bring up a tripod so that they can burn incense to the sovereign deities.' The blessed martyrs Processus and Martinianus, hearing this, said: 'We once offered ourselves (as sacrifice) to Almighty God.' And when the tripod had been brought, he said to them: 'Do what I say.' And they brought up a gilded statue of Jupiter. When they saw it, they burst out laughing and spat on Jupiter and on the tripod in the presence of Paulinus, the Master of the Offices. This same Paulinus ordered them to be strung up on the rack, and to be stretched out with cords and beaten with staves; they, rejoicing, kept saying with a cheerful countenance, 'We give thanks to You, Lord Jesus Christ.' Paulinus, the Master of the Offices, inflamed with exceeding fury, ordered that they place torches about their sides; but they shouted out, saying, 'Blessed is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom His blessed apostles Peter and Paul have proclaimed.'

8. There was there a certain matron, an aristocratic lady named Lucina,²¹ who stood before them, who comforted them and said to them, 'Soldiers of Christ, persevere, and do not fear the punishments, which are only temporal.' Paulinus the Master of the Offices said to them: 'What is this madness of yours?' They, strengthened, were laughing at his punishments. Then he ordered the soldiers to beat them with scorpion-whips²² while they were suspended on the rack, with a herald proclaiming: 'Do not scorn the commandments of the emperors.' In that same hour Paulinus, the Master of the Offices, lost (the sight of) his left eye. Then, seized with repentance, he began to cry out because of the pain, and to say: 'O the incantations of magic art!' And he ordered them to be taken down from the rack and be thrust, now exhausted by pain, into the Mamertine prison. The venerable matron Lucina attended to the martyrs ceaselessly in the prison. After three days Paulinus, suddenly seized by a demon, breathed his last. Then his son, Pompinius, began to shout out loud as he went to the palace: 'Rulers and governors (of the people), help our republic, so that those possessed of magic arts may be exterminated.'

9. Hearing this, Caesarius, the urban prefect,²³ told the emperor Nero what had happened. Nero, the emperor, gave the order, saying: 'Let there be no delay, but let them be quickly exterminated.' Pompinius, the son of Paulinus the Master of the Offices, began powerfully to importune the urban prefect Caesarius. Then, at the command of the prefect, when he had passed sentence on them, they were cast out of the prison and taken outside the walls of Rome on the Via Aurelia, and there they were beheaded. When the blessed Lucina saw this, she followed them with her household until they arrived at the aqueduct,²⁴ where they were beheaded, and their truncated bodies were left to be devoured by dogs.

²¹ A devout matron named Lucina recovers and buries the bodies of executed martyrs in several Roman *passiones*, probably owing to the influence of the *Passio S. Sebastiani* (III.88): in addition to the present *passio*, she appears in those of Pope Cornelius (VII.3) and Pope Marcellus (XX.21); see Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', pp. 365–73, and Cooper, 'The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop', pp. 311–16.

²² A 'scorpion-whip' (*scorpio*) is explained by Isidore as being 'knotty' and 'thorny' (in distinction to a slender *virga*, 'birch'), and is so called because it inflicts a curved wound on the body: 'si certe nodosa vel aculeata, scorpio rectissimo nomine, quia arcuato vulnere in corpus infigitur' (*Etym.* v. 27. 18); cf. Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 87–8.

²³ There is no record of any urban prefect named Caesarius in the period up to AD 254; see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 113–21.

²⁴ The aqueduct in question is presumably the Aqua Traiana, built by the emperor Trajan in AD 109 to bring water from the Lago Bracciano (*Lacus Sabatinus*) north of Rome to a large receiving tank (*castellum*) on the Via Aurelia, just inside the Aurelian Wall; parts of it are still visible next to the Via Aurelia Antica, at the Villa Doria Pamphili; see Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, pp. 299–307; P. Virgili, 'Aqua Traiana', *LTUR* I, pp. 70–2, with *addendum* at V, p. 226 [C. Bruun]; Z. Mara, 'Traiana Aqua', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 177–9, with figs. 125–6; and H. Dodge, '"Greater than the Pyramids": the Water Supply of Ancient Rome', in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, pp. 166–209, at 179–80.

10. Then the holy matron Lucina gathered up their bodies and embalmed them with precious spices and buried them on her estate, in a catacomb, next to the place where they had been beheaded, on the Via Aurelia,²⁵ on 2 July,²⁶ where they provide their bounties up to the present day, in the reign of our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father in unity with the Holy Ghost forever and ever.

²⁵ The cemetery of SS. Processus and Martinianus has never been satisfactorily identified; see the studies cited in n. 7. According to the seventh-century itinerary called the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, the martyrs' bodies lay beneath the ground (in a crypt), while that of St Lucina lay in an upper part of the same cemetery; a church was subsequently built over them (see Appendix IV (a) [§12], p. 662). At the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great delivered one of his Homilies on the Gospels (ii. 32) in this church, 'in basilica sanctorum Processi et Martiniani die natalis eorum' (CCSL CXLI, p. 277). The church no longer survives.

²⁶ SS. Processus and Martinianus are commemorated on 2 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 654), and in the Gregorian sacramentaries (Appendix V (d), p. 672), but not in the Verona and Gelasian sacramentaries.

XX

Pope Marcellus and Companions

c.500 × 550; relevant to the cemetery of Priscilla (Via Salaria Nuova); the *titulus*-church of St Marcellus (Via Lata); the cemetery of Thrason (Via Salaria Nuova); and the ‘Great Cemetery’ or *Coemeterium maius* (Via Nomentana)

The principal focus of the present *passio* is Marcellus who, as bishop of Rome at the time of Diocletian and Maximian, was instrumental in the conversion and baptism of a number of Christian followers, whose subsequent martyrdoms form the major part of the narrative.¹ Like all these *passiones* it is a work of pure fiction—serious doubts have been raised about whether a Pope Marcellus ever existed—, but it is valuable *inter alia* for the topographical detail which it contains, and for revealing how an imaginative author, having some familiarity with the churches and cemeteries of Rome, was able to fabricate a narrative from various notices about local martyrs.

The narrative is as follows. When Maximian the Augustus returned to Rome and began construction work on the Baths of Diocletian, he compelled all soldiers who were Christians to work in stone quarries and cement works (c. 1). A wealthy Christian named Thrason began to provide these exhausted workers with food, which was distributed by Sisinnius and Cyriacus, Smaragdus, and Largus; and when Pope Marcellus heard of these good works, he consecrated Sisinnius and Cyriacus as deacons (c. 2). One of those condemned to digging was an old man named Saturninus; Sisinnius and Cyriacus began carrying loads for him, as a result of which Sisinnius was arrested (c. 3). He was brought before Maximian, who handed him over to the prefect Laodicius, whereupon Sisinnius was remanded in custody in the Mamertine prison (c. 4). After seventeen days he was brought to trial by Apronianus, the prison registrar, who asked to be baptized, and he was duly baptized by the deacon, Sisinnius, and then confirmed by Pope Marcellus (c. 5). Apronianus, now a

¹ Listed in *BHL* 5234; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 224–5; Profumo, *La memoria di S. Pietro*, pp. 16–46 [‘Le Gesta Marcelli’] and 47–76 [‘Lo stato agiografico proprio delle Gesta Marcelli’]; Duchesne, ‘Les légendes de l’Alta Semita’, pp. 42–56; *DACL* X/2, cols. 1753–60 [H. Leclercq]; A. Amore, ‘È esistito papa Marcello?’, *Antoniano* 33 (1958), 57–75; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 223–33; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 67–71.

Christian, was arraigned before the prefect, and then executed (c. 6). Saturninus and Sisinnius were placed in custody, and then brought to trial before the prefect at the temple of Tellus; when asked to sacrifice, they caused the bronze tripod to dissolve, whereupon two soldiers, Papias and Maurus, shouted out their belief in the Christian God (c. 7). Papias and Maurus were accordingly tortured and executed, as were Saturninus and Sisinnius (cc. 8–9). Artemia, the daughter of Diocletian, was possessed by a demon, which requested that Cyriacus, still languishing in prison, be brought in (c. 10). Cyriacus exorcized the demon, which prophesied that it would make Cyriacus travel to Persia (c. 11). Meanwhile, Largus and Smaragdus catechized Artemia (c. 12). A message arrived from Sapor, king of Persia, asking that Cyriacus be sent to Persia to exorcize a demon which was possessing his daughter (c. 13). Cyriacus travelled to Persia, exorcized the demon, baptized many Christians, and returned to Rome in great honour, whereupon Diocletian presented him with a house near to the Baths of Diocletian (cc. 14–15). Diocletian left Rome for Dalmatia, and then died, leaving the empire to his son Maximian; and Maximian, driven by jealousy of the affection shown by his sister Artemia to Cyriacus, had Cyriacus arrested (c. 16). This caused Pope Marcellus to accost Maximian, asking why he was persecuting Christians, as a result of which Marcellus himself was tortured and expelled (c. 17). Cyriacus, together with Largus, Smaragdus, and Crescentianus, was brought before Carpasius the deputy (c. 18). Carpasius tortured Crescentianus until he died (c. 19). Carpasius then summoned Cyriacus, who, on refusing to sacrifice, was tortured and then beheaded, together with Largus and Smaragdus and many others, on the Via Salaria (c. 20). Pope Marcellus, with the assistance of a Roman matron named Lucina, recovered the bodies and buried them on her estate on the Via Ostiense (c. 21). At Lucina's suggestion, Marcellus consecrated her house on the Via Lata as a church; but this action so enraged Maximian that he turned the recently-consecrated church into a stable for animals of the imperial post, and forced Marcellus to tend the animals, a task which so exhausted him that he died a few years later, and was buried by Lucina and John the priest in the cemetery of Priscilla (c. 22). Carpasius the deputy took possession of the house of Cyriacus, with its baptismal font, which he used as a plunge pool at parties with whores and actresses; but this sacrilegious behaviour caused nineteen of them to be struck down dead (c. 23). The bodies of SS. Cyriacus, Largus, Smaragdus, Crescentianus, Memmia, and Juliana were buried on the Via Ostiense, at the eighth mile from Rome (c. 24).

At the time when the present *passio* was composed, during the first half of the sixth century, numerous traditions were in circulation in Rome concerning a saint named Marcellus. The author of the *passio* did his best to combine as many of these traditions as possible, so as to create a coherent figure as the focal point of his narrative, but did not always do so successfully. First, there was a pope named Marcellus, the precise dates of whose pontificate cannot be

established with confidence, but which seem to have fallen between 305 and 309.² A pope of this name is not listed in the *Deposito episcoporum* (Appendix I, p. 636), but is the subject of an entry in the *Liber pontificalis*, where his pontificate is placed after that of Marcellinus (295–303) and before that of Eusebius (309/310?).³ Another important early source for Marcellus is an epigram by Damasus, which is preserved in three early medieval *sylogae*,⁴ but which must once have adorned his tomb in the hypogean basilica of Pope Silvester within the cemetery of Priscilla (on which see the account of its excavation, later in this section):

Because the truthful bishop⁵ required that the lapsed bewail their sins,⁶
 he was (regarded) as the bitter enemy of all poor wretches.
 Hence anger, hence hatred, discord, quarrels,
 mutiny, slaughter, accompany him: the bonds of peace are dissolved.
 Because of another's sin [i.e. accusation], who denied Christ in peacetime,
 he was driven from his homeland by the ferocity of a tyrant.
 Damasus wished briefly to record these details (which he) discovered,
 so that the populace can recognize the merit of Marcellus.⁷

The gist of this epigram is that Pope Marcellus was intransigent on the question of *lapsi*, those who had denied their Christianity to avoid prosecution, and sought re-entry to the church when the 'Great Persecution' had

² On Pope Marcellus, see the balanced assessment in *EP* I, pp. 307–13 [A. Di Berardino]. The existence of a pope named Marcellus has been doubted by various scholars, notably Theodor Mommsen, because he is omitted from Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, and from the Latin translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon* by Jerome [CPG 3494], ed. R. Helm, *Die Chronik des Hieronymus* (Berlin, 1956), p. 228, which records no pope between Marcellinus and Eusebius.

³ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 43–4; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 164; trans. Davis, pp. 13–14. The entry in *LP* unfortunately cannot be used as independent evidence of the pontificate, because it is heavily dependent on the present *passio* (Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 231), save that the most flagrant anachronisms have been corrected by the papal biographer, who (for example) corrected the name of the emperor under whom the pope was sentenced to penal servitude from Maximian to Maxentius; but other details of the papal biography—that the pope was condemned to labour in the stables (*catabulum*) of the imperial post, that he dedicated as a *titulus*-church the house of a matron named Lucina, who had donated it to the church, that he was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla—are taken directly from the *passio*.

⁴ Ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, pp. 62 (*sylloge* of Tours), 103 (Fourth *sylloge* of Lorsch), and 138 (*sylloge* of Verdun).

⁵ Translating *rector* as 'bishop' (perhaps tendentiously, given the doubts which have been expressed about the pontificate of Marcellus, and the suspicion in some quarters that Marcellus may have acted as administrator or 'governor' of the church of Rome during the vacancy between Marcellinus and Eusebius, but not as its pope/bishop). Note that Trout also translates *rector* here as 'bishop' (*Damasus of Rome*, p. 158).

⁶ Pope Marcellus is presented as the *veridicus rector* who insisted that the *lapsi*—that is, those Christians who denied their belief at the time of persecution—undergo suitable penance before being readmitted to the Church. The problem is that which had animated the Novatianist schism in the third century, and was to animate the Donatist schism throughout the fifth.

⁷ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, p. 181 [no. 40]; Ferrua and Carletti, *Damaso e i martiri di Roma*, pp. 45–6 [no. 13]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 157–9; trans. Appendix II (q), pp. 646–7.

ended (in Rome by 306);⁸ in order to keep peace within the church, the ferocious 'tyrant'—who is presumably to be identified with Maxentius (306–12)—sent him into exile. The author of the *passio* makes no mention of Marcellus' exile.⁹

The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* contains the following entry against 16 January: 'Rome, on the Via Salaria (Nuova), in the cemetery of Priscilla, the burial of St Marcellus, bishop and confessor' (Appendix III, p. 651).¹⁰ As the entry makes clear, Marcellus was venerated not as a martyr but as a *confessor*—which implies that he was willing to confess his Christian belief to the authorities, but was not executed as a martyr for having done so. This detail can be seen to square with the account of Marcellus in the present *passio*, which describes Marcellus as dying from the exertions of penal servitude, but not undergoing capital punishment. As for the statement that he was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla, the pilgrim itinerary known as *De locis sanctis martyrum* states, 'Near to the same Via Salaria St Silvester lies, and at his feet the holy pope Siricius, and many others, that is, the holy pope Caelestinus, SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis, Marcellus the bishop' (Appendix IV (b) [§11], below, p. 664). The popes in question are Silvester (314–35), Siricius (384–99), and Caelestinus (422–32); but note that Marcellus is described as bishop but not as pope, and that, once again, he is not said to be a martyr.¹¹ Of the three popes, however, the most famous was undoubtedly Pope Silvester. Francesco Tolotti, who conducted extensive excavations in the cemetery of Priscilla and has published the fullest account of it, identified as its most striking feature a large octagonal crypt; Tolotti suggested that the octagonal crypt—in effect a hypogean basilica—was where the three popes must have been buried.¹²

⁸ See discussion of Marcellus and the *lapsi* by P.-A. Février, 'Vie et mort dans les "Epigrammata Damasiana"', in *Saecularia Damasiana*, pp. 89–111, who compares the present epigram to Damasus' epigram on Pope Eusebius (310), the successor of Marcellus, during whose pontificate (according to Damasus) the Christian 'populace was torn asunder by mounting fury, (resulting in) sedition, slaughter, war, discord, quarrels' and, as in the present epigram, the protagonists 'were driven out by the ferocity of a tyrant [i.e. Maxentius]' (Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 129–33 [no. 18]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 117–19). On the rupture of the Roman church, alluded to by Damasus, see Saghy, 'Scinditur in partes populus'.

⁹ Unless the word *expelleretur* (c. 17) alludes to this exile; see c. 17 with n. 74.

¹⁰ It is also the case that the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* records against 7 October the burial of 'Bishop Marcellus' on the Via Appia (Bern and Weissenburg manuscripts). Who is this second Bishop Marcellus? And is he different from, or identical to, the Marcellus, bishop and confessor, buried in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria?

¹¹ It was this distinction that prompted Agostino Amore to argue that the 'bishop' Marcellus buried in the cemetery of Priscilla was not a pope of Rome but the bishop of some other (unidentified) Italian see who had come to Rome and died there: 'È esistito Papa Marcello?', pp. 67–74, and *idem*, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 70. Subsequent scholars such as Silvana Episcopo discount Amore's argument, finding it 'poco credibile' (*Il titulus Marcelli sulla Via Lata*, p. 19).

¹² Tolotti, *Il cimitero di Priscilla*, pp. 237–57, with pl. III, esp. p. 256: 'nella cripta ottagonale conviene a ciò molto bene il grande sepolcro e, aggiunto nel mausoleo dopo alcuni anni in posizione preeminentissima.'

Marcellus, whose burial preceded those of the three popes, was presumably interred in the same octagonal crypt, which subsequently came to be known as the basilica of St Silvester.

Another complicating factor is that there was (and is) a well-attested *titulus*-church in the name of Marcellus in central Rome, on the Via Lata (now known as the Corso): S. Marcello al Corso.¹³ The existence of this church is recorded as early as 418, when, according to a letter of Symmachus, the urban prefect, to the emperor Honorius, Pope Boniface was said to have been ordained *in ecclesia Marcelli*.¹⁴ In the Roman synod of 499, the *titulus Marcelli* was represented by three priests,¹⁵ and a century later, the synod held under Pope Gregory the Great in 595 was attended by three priests of the *titulus sancti Marcelli*.¹⁶ The situation is presumably like that of other *titulus*-churches in Rome: a property was gifted to the church by an otherwise unknown donor named Marcellus, who over the course of centuries came to be regarded as a saint; in this case, as in the exactly parallel case of the *titulus Clementis*, the donor came to be identified with the pope of that name. Whether the identification was first made by the author of the present *passio* cannot be determined; but it is understandable that he should have wished to associate a famous church in central Rome with the protagonist of his *passio*; and it was perhaps the proximity of the *titulus*-church to the stables of the imperial post which suggested to him the penal servitude of tending the animals of the post which led to his exhaustion and death—as a saint, but not technically as a martyr.

In the *passio*, the role of Marcellus is that expected of the bishop of Rome: he consecrates deacons (c. 2), confirms baptisms performed by his deacons (c. 5), and protests to the emperor about his treatment of Christians (c. 17); but the real focus of the text is on the numerous Christians who were martyred during his pontificate, or who entrusted their financial resources to the Church, such as Thrason (cc. 2–3, 8)¹⁷ and Lucina (cc. 21–2).¹⁸ The names of these

¹³ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 77–80; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiteriali di Roma antica', pp. 236–8; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 308. On the church of S. Marcello al Corso, see Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 205–15; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 164–5; Episcopo, 'La basilica di S. Marcello'; *eadem*, 'S. Marcellus, Ecclesia, Titulus', *LTUR* III, pp. 211–12, with fig. 144; and esp. *eadem*, *Il 'titulus Marcelli' sulla Via Lata.*, esp. pp. 44–55 and 81–7 on the late antique church.

¹⁴ *Collectio Avellana*, Ep. xiv. 6 (CSEL XXXV, p. 60).

¹⁵ *MGH*, AA XII, pp. 412, 413 and 414.

¹⁶ *MGH*, *Epist.* I, p. 367.

¹⁷ On Thrason, see *BSS* XII, col. 640 [A. Amore]. The name is evidently meant to suggest that of the founder of the cemetery of Thrason (otherwise unknown) on the Via Salaria Nuova, on which see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 439–53; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 251; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 123–4; D. De Francesco, 'Trasonis coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 183–4, with fig. 130; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 48–55. Note that this same Thrason figures in the *passio* of St Susanna (XV.21).

¹⁸ A woman named Lucina figures in several *passiones* as a pious Christian matron who helps to recover and bury the bodies of martyrs. The earliest occurrence of such a woman is in the

benefactors, as well as those of the martyrs, appear to have been drawn from various sources which previously had nothing whatsoever to do with Marcellus. The martyrs may be listed as follows:

Sisinnius (cc. 2–8) and *Saturninus* (cc. 3, 7–8).¹⁹ Of these two martyrs, St Saturninus is the better known. The *Depositio martyrum* has the following entry against 29 November:²⁰ ‘Saturninus, in the cemetery of Thrason’ (Appendix I, p. 636). By the seventh century, there was a church dedicated to St Saturninus, according to the pilgrim itinerary called the *Notitia ecclesiarum* (Appendix IV (a) [§3], p. 660).²¹ We know from the correspondence of Cyprian that Saturninus was born at Carthage and exiled to Rome during the persecution of Decius (249–51), where he was subsequently martyred, probably during the persecution of Valerian (257–8).²² The Carthaginian origin of Saturninus is confirmed in an epigram of Damasus: ‘A citizen now of Christ, he had been (a citizen) of Carthage, at the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church); with his blood he exchanged his homeland, name, and kindred.’²³ The author of the *passio* took over the name of Saturninus and his association with Thrason, but brazenly overlooked his Carthaginian origins and his martyrdom under Valerian, in order to make him an associate of Thrason during the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian. As for Sisinnius, he is unknown outside the present *passio*. The date of their burial, attended to by Thrason and John the priest (c. 8), is given as 28 November: a simple error for 29 November, given in the *Depositio martyrum*.

Cyriacus (cc. 2–3, 10–20), *Largus* and *Smaragdus* (cc. 2, 13–15, 18–19), and *Crescentianus* (cc. 18–19). According to the *passio*, these four martyrs, together with two women named Memmia and Juliana (who are not otherwise discussed in the text), were buried at ‘the eighth mile, more or less’, of the Via Ostiense (c. 24). This same group is commemorated as follows against 8 August in the *Depositio martyrum*: ‘on the Via Ostiense, at the *ballistaria* at

passio of St Sebastian (III.89), and thereafter in those of Pope Cornelius (VII.3), Processus and Martinianus (XIX.8), in addition to the present *passio* of Pope Marcellus; see Verrando, ‘Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche’, pp. 353–73, and Cooper, ‘The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop’, pp. 311–16. In the present *passio* Lucina is depicted as a wealthy landowner, with estates on the Via Ostiense, which she makes available for the burial of martyrs, and property on the Via Lata which she gifts to the Church for the *titulus Marcelli*.

¹⁹ On these two martyrs, see BSS XI, cols. 688–95 [B. M. Margarucci Italiani].

²⁰ Cf. the similar (and derivative) entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 29 November: ‘Rome, <in the cemetery> of Thrason, Saturninus, Chrysanthus, Daria, Maurus and others’ (Appendix III, below, p. 657).

²¹ Note that the author of the *Notitia ecclesiarum* absurdly makes St Saturninus a pope. The church of St Saturninus is also recorded in the *De locis sanctis martyrum* (Appendix IV (b) [§ 11]).

²² Cyprian, *Epp.* xxi. 4 and xxii. 3 (CCSL III B, pp. 114, 119).

²³ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 188–90 [no. 46]: ‘Incola nunc Christi fuerat Carthaginis ante, / tempore quo gladius secuit pia viscera matris; / sanguine mutavit patriam nomenque genusque’; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 166–7.

the seventh mile,²⁴ Cyriacus, Largus, Crescentianus, Memmia, Juliana, and Smaragdus' (Appendix I, p. 635).²⁵ This is clearly the source which provided the martyrs' names for the author of our *passio*. But it is also the case that there was a *titulus*-church in Rome in the name of one Cyriacus, located, according to our author, near to the Baths of Diocletian (c. 15).²⁶ The author of the *passio* has combined Cyriacus of the *titulus*-church with Cyriacus buried on the Via Ostiense, and then taken over from the *Depositio martyrum* the names of the companions of Cyriacus (Largus, Smaragdus and Crescentianus). We know from the *Liber pontificalis* that Pope Honorius I (625–38) built a church in honour of St Cyriacus on the Via Ostiense;²⁷ and this church, together with a modest underground cemetery, came to light during the excavations conducted by Francesco Fornari in 1915–16.²⁸ Fornari was able to identify the small, apsed church built by Pope Honorius, and found it to contain a number of sarcophagi; the author of the *passio* states that Cyriacus and those (unnamed persons) who were executed with him 'rest in stone sarcophagi' at the seventh mile of the Via Ostiense (c. 21), suggesting that the author may have seen the sarcophagi in question.²⁹

Apronianus (cc. 5–6).³⁰ The *passio* states that Apronianus was executed on 2 February and buried at the second mile of the Via Salaria (Nuova), presumably in the cemetery of Thrason.³¹ No martyr named Apronianus is found any

²⁴ There is considerable uncertainty about the meaning of the word *ballistaria* (cf. *TLL* II, col. 1702: 'incertum quid lateat'). Tomassetti and Tomassetti thought that the term referred to a factory where *ballistae* were manufactured (*La campagna romana* V, p. 216); it seems in any case to have been a place where *ballistae* were kept, perhaps a fort, situated so as to guard the river Tiber, at a place now known as the 'Mezzocamino'; see V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Ballistaria, ad', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 205–6.

²⁵ This same entry is repeated (with some error) in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 8 August (Appendix III, below, p. 655).

²⁶ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 75–7; Duchesne, 'Les légendes de l'Alta Semita', pp. 29–30, 49–50, and 56; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 228–34; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 594; but the location of this church has never been convincingly identified. See G. De Spirito, 'Domus Cyriaci', *LTUR* II, pp. 90–1.

²⁷ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 172; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 323–4; trans. Davis, p. 66: 'He built from the ground up the church to St Cyriac the martyr at the 7th mile on the Via Ostiensis'.

²⁸ See F. Fornari, 'Le recenti esplorazioni nel cimitero di S. Ciriaco al VII miglio della via Ostiense', *École française de Rome: Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 36 (1916–17), 57–72, with figs. 1–2 and pl. II, and Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 132–3, as well as the following more recent studies: F. Tommasi, 'Nuovi elementi riguardanti il cimitero di S. Ciriaco sulla via Ostiense', *RACr* 73 (1997), 493–524; C. Novello, 'Ulteriori elementi sul cimitero di S. Ciriaco presso la via Ostiense. A proposito del recupero di un frammento damasiano', *RACr* 74 (1998), 281–95; F. Tommasi, 'S. Cyriaci ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 180–4 with figs. 177–83; and V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'I santuari martiriali', in *Santuari d'Italia: Lazio*, ed. Boesch Gajano et al., pp. 58–75, esp. pp. 65–7 with fig. 15.

²⁹ The sarcophagi are illustrated by Tommasi, 'S. Cyriaci ecclesia', figs. 179 (the sarcophagus of a young woman named Optata) and 180.

³⁰ *BSS* II, col. 322 [I. Tarsi].

³¹ There is no entry for Apronianus against 2 February in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III, below, p. 651). It is possible that the name was meant to suggest that of

other source, and it is probable that the author simply lifted the name from that of the founder of the cemetery of Apronianus on the Via Latina.³²

Papias and *Maurus* (cc. 7, 9).³³ We learn from the *passio* (c. 9) that Papias and Maurus were two soldiers who were converted by the example of Sisinnius and Saturninus, and were consequently executed; their bodies were then buried on 29 January on the Via Nomentana,³⁴ near to where St Peter conducted his baptisms.³⁵ The place where they were buried is the so-called 'Great Cemetery' (*Coemeterium Maius*), near to but distinct from the cemetery of St Agnes, on the same Via Nomentana.³⁶ During excavations of this cemetery during the early 1950s, Umberto Fasola discovered a fresco (datable to the fourth century) showing two soldiers being led to execution; and this fresco, in combination with an inscription found in a nearby gallery naming Maurus, is taken to be evidence that the martyrs Papias and Maurus were indeed buried in this cemetery.³⁷

It is clear from these examples that the author of the *passio* began with the figure of a pope named Marcellus, whom he identified as the founder of the *titulus*-church of Marcellus on the Via Lata, and then augmented his narrative by lifting characters both from earlier *passiones* (e.g. Lucina), and from

the founder of the cemetery of Apronianus on the Via Latina, on which see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 303–4, and Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 170. According to the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* for 25 December, St Eugenia was buried in the cemetery of Apronianus (Appendix III, below, p. 650).

³² It is not, however, an uncommon name: some ten persons of various ranks (senators, governors, consuls) named Apronianus are listed in *PLRE* I, pp. 86–8, including the present *commentariensis* listed on p. 86, who is, however, marked as a person 'known only from sources of doubtful reliability', in this case the present *passio*.

³³ *BSS* X, cols. 317–19 [A. Amore].

³⁴ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry for 29 January: 'Rome, the death of the soldiers Papias and <Maurus>' (Appendix III, below, p. 651). The name *Maurus* has been omitted from the entry, no doubt by scribal inadvertence.

³⁵ The reference to the *nymphae beati Petri* has been taken by some scholars as evidence for St Peter's evangelizing in Rome, in the vicinity of the Via Nomentana (before his eventual execution on the Vatican Hill), perhaps near the so-called *Coemeterium Maius* (at the second mile of the Via Nomentana); see, for example, Attilio Profumo, *La memoria di S. Pietro*, pp. 68–71 and 125–31, and the articles by Umberto Fasola cited below, n. 37. But the connection with St Peter's mission is to a large extent the product of wishful thinking; the most that can be said is that the author of the present *passio*, writing during the first half of the sixth century, thought that there was a baptistery there associated with St Peter. The question is helpfully surveyed by Lucrezia Spera, 'Nymphas beati Petri', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 127–9.

³⁶ On the *Coemeterium Maius*, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 397–412; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 246–9; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 144–7; A. M. Nieddu, 'Maius coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 11–15; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 76–9.

³⁷ See U. M. Fasola, 'Osservazioni su una pittura del cimitero Maggiore', in *Miscellanea Giulio Belvederi* (Vatican City, 1954–5), pp. 287–302; *idem*, 'Le recenti scoperte agiografiche nel Coemeterium Maius', in *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia*, 3rd ser.: *Rendiconti* 28 (1955–6), 75–89; and *idem*, 'La regione delle cattedre nel cimitero Maggiore', *RACr* 37 (1961), 237–67. The relevant inscription is printed *ICUR* VIII, no. 21592.

martyrological sources such as the *Depositio martyrum* and the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Cyriacus, Crescentianus, Largus, and Smaragdus), and the names of founders of suburban Roman cemeteries (Thrason, Apronianus). Sometimes he created characters *ex nihilo* (Sisinnius; Artemia). In order to lend his tale some semblance of verisimilitude, he set it in Rome during the tetrarchy of Diocletian and Maximian (even though he managed to introduce many gross anachronisms, such as King Sapor/Shapur of Persia as a contemporary of Diocletian), and then included many references to topographical features—some of them apparently observed by the author at first hand (the dedicatory inscription of the Baths of Diocletian; the sarcophagi at the church of St Cyriacus on the Via Ostiense)—which seem to give the work an air of authenticity. But it is ultimately a work of pure invention.

Text. The *passio* of Pope Marcellus enjoyed wide circulation: it survives in more than 200 manuscripts.³⁸ The text has been printed by Mombricitus (II, pp. 169–73), and by Jean Bolland in one of the first volumes of *Acta SS., Ianuarii* II [1643], pp. 5–9. The translation which follows is based on the edition of Bolland (whose chapter numbering I adopt), but there are occasional words and phrases which have fallen out of Bolland's text which I supply from Mombricitus.

1. At the time when Maximian the Augustus³⁹ returned to Rome from the African provinces,⁴⁰ wishing to please Diocletian the Augustus by constructing baths in his name from the ground up,⁴¹ he began in his hatred of the

³⁸ *BHLms* lists 166 manuscripts, and Lanéry was able to add a further forty-three ('Hagiographie', p. 227, n. 483).

³⁹ It is interesting that the text of Mombricitus reads *Caesar* rather than *Augustus* at this point, and throughout the remainder of the narrative. The variant reading has chronological implications: Maximian was appointed Caesar by Diocletian in 285/6, and then promoted to Augustus on 1 March 286 (*PLRE* I, p. 574). The reading *Caesar* would therefore have the implication of dating these events to that period of less than a year. But since we learn from the sequel that the events are also said to be taking place during the pontificate of Marcellus—who was pope at some point between 305 and 309 (see below, n. 46)—the reading *Caesar* in Mombricitus is to be rejected in favour of *Augustus*. Maximian abdicated with Diocletian on 1 May 305, but became Augustus for a second time in 306; he committed suicide after a failed revolt against Constantine in 310. The author of the present *passio* makes Maximian out to be the son of Diocletian (c. 16), a detail derived from the *passio* of St Susanna (XV.2); but this is historical nonsense (see *PLRE* I, pp. 573–4).

⁴⁰ Maximian (as Augustus) dealt with a revolt in Africa at some point between 297 and 298, and returned to Rome in triumph, probably in 298 (see following note); see Barnes, *The New Empire*, p. 59.

⁴¹ On the Baths of Diocletian, see Platner–Ashby, pp. 527–30, esp. 527, who draw attention to an inscription (*CIL* VI, no. 1130 = no. 31242) on the Baths of Diocletian (located on the Viminal, next to the present-day Stazione Termini) to the effect that 'D(omini) n(ostri) Diocletianus et Maximianus invicti seniores Aug(usti)...thermas felices Diocletianas, quas Maximianus Aug. rediens ex Africa sub praesentia maiestatis disposuit ac fieri iussit et Diocletiani Aug. fratris sui nomine consecravit.' Maximian's return to Rome took place in the autumn of 298; the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian in favour of Constantius (Chlorus) and (Galerius) Maximianus took place on 1 May 305. The inscription therefore belongs to the period between these two dates, and

Christians⁴² to compel all Roman soldiers <who confessed to being Christians>⁴³ to forced labour, and he condemned some to work in stone quarries, others to digging sand⁴⁴ in various places.

2. In those days there was a Christian named Thrason,⁴⁵ a wealthy man rich in property, and upright in his manner of living. When this man saw that Christians were being driven to exhaustion through hard labour, he began from his own resources to administer sustenance and food to the holy martyrs through the agency of the Christian men Sisinnius and Cyriacus and Smaragdus and Largus. Hearing of this, Marcellus, the bishop of Rome,⁴⁶ was filled with great joy concerning the alms which Thrason was distributing to the saintly (Christians). And summoning to him the holy Christian men who were servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, (namely) Cyriacus and Sisinnius, Smaragdus, and Largus, he questioned them about it; and they informed St Marcellus how Thrason was distributing food to God's saints. Then he was filled with joy and, taking advice, he consecrated Sisinnius and Cyriacus as deacons of the church of Rome.

3. Now it happened one night that while they were carrying on their shoulders the food which Thrason was distributing, they were arrested by

the baths took between seven and eight years to complete. Platner–Ashby (ibid.) point out that the bricks used belong entirely to the period of Diocletian. (It is striking that the author of the *passio* appears to incorporate wording from this inscription: *Maximianus Augustus rediens de partibus Africae*; possibly he had been able to inspect the inscription when it was still *in situ*.) See also Richardson, pp. 391–3, with figs. 72 and 86; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 352–4 with fig. 175; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 248–52 with fig. 62; and D. Candilio, 'Thermae Diocletiani', *LTUR* V, pp. 53–8, with figs. 34–7.

⁴² In Africa, Italy and Spain, Maximian enforced Diocletian's First Edict of Persecution (24 February 303), and there were numerous martyrs, especially in Africa; but he did not promulgate any of the subsequent edicts of persecution; see Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 124–5.

⁴³ The text is opaque as transmitted; perhaps wording such as <*qui Christianos se esse confessi sunt*> has fallen out after *Romanos*: the point being that the emperor is singling out among his soldiers those who are Christians. See also G. De Spirito, 'Thermae Diocletiani (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* V, p. 58, who points out that the present *passio* is the unique instance in hagiographical literature in which it is stated that Christians were condemned to enforced labour on public building-works (*condemnatio ad opus publicum*).

⁴⁴ The 'sand', made from soft tufa, was used for making the cement which bound the bricks used in construction; see also the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.2).

⁴⁵ The name *Thrason* is probably intended to suggest that of the founder of the cemetery on the Via Salaria Nuova, on which see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 439–53; A. Ferrua, 'Visite del Torrigio alla catacomba di S. Saturnino', *RACr* 58 (1982), 31–45; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 123–4; D. De Francesco, 'Trasonis coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 183–4; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 48–9.

⁴⁶ Marcellus was apparently pope at some point between 305 and 309. The *Liber pontificalis* records that he held the pontificate for five years and seven months (*LP*, trans. Davis, p. 13). There is much debate about precisely when Marcellus was pope, and indeed about whether he in fact ever existed; see A. Amore, 'È esistito Papa Marcello?', *Antoniano* 33 (1958), 57–75, and *EP* I, p. 312 [A. Di Bernardino], where there is a valuable survey of the arguments.

pagan soldiers and taken to the tribune Exspurius.⁴⁷ Taking charge of them, the tribune placed them in public custody; after the third day he announced this to Maximian the Augustus. When Maximian heard this, he ordered that they be condemned to digging sand under guard, and to transporting it on their shoulders to the place where the Baths [of Diocletian] were being built. There was an old man among them named Saturninus, who was already decrepit with age, and they began to help him with the carrying. When the guards saw this taking place, namely that Sisinnius and Cyriacus the deacons were carrying both their own and others' loads with the help of Christ, they were amazed, and reported this to Exspurius the tribune. Then the tribune announced it to Maximian the Augustus, saying that they were rendering glory to Christ with all reverence through hymns and praise of God.

4. At that same time Maximian sent (a messenger) and commanded that Sisinnius be brought before him. When he had been brought in, Maximian the Augustus said to him: 'What is your name?' He replied: 'I am the sinner Sisinnius, servant of the servants⁴⁸ of our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁴⁹ Maximian said: 'What are the chants (you are singing)?' He replied: 'If you were to realize the nature of the chants of the faithful, you would certainly know your Creator.' Maximian replied, saying: 'And who is this creator, if not Hercules Invictus?'⁵⁰ Sisinnius the deacon replied: 'It is a foul experience for us to name and hear his name.' Maximian said: 'Hasten to make quickly a choice of one of two things: either sacrifice to the god Hercules, or I will roast your flesh with fire.' Sisinnius the deacon said: 'I have always desired this; for if indeed I shall be found worthy, I will accept the desired crown.' In a rage Maximian handed him over to the prefect Laodicius.⁵¹ Then Laodicius the prefect thrust him into the Mamertine prison,⁵² and he remained there for seventeen days.

⁴⁷ No person of this name, tribune or otherwise, is recorded in *PLRE* I.

⁴⁸ The phrase *servus servorum* is biblical in origin (Gen. 9: 25), and appears first to have been used by a bishop to describe himself in the salutation of a letter by Augustine: 'Augustinus episcopus servus Christi et per ipsum servus servorum ipsius' (*Ep.* ccxvii: *CSEL* LVII, p. 403). Gregory the Great typically styled himself *servus servorum Dei* in the salutations of his letters, and the phrase was used widely by bishops thereafter. The same phrase is used by a martyr confessing his Christianity in the *passio* of the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII.11).

⁴⁹ The words from 'What is your name' to 'servants of our Lord Jesus Christ' are omitted from the edition in *Acta SS.*, and have been supplied from Mombritius.

⁵⁰ According to Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 39 (trans. Bird, p. 43), Maximian 'received the surname Herculus from his worship of that deity'.

⁵¹ No *praefectus urbi* named Laodicius is attested in the (fairly complete) list of urban prefects for the years 284–337 compiled by Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 110–11 (based on the list given in the 'Chronographer of 354'). The Laodicius listed in *PLRE* I, p. 495 as *praefectus urbi* between 296 and 305 is taken from the present *passio*, and is accordingly marked as 'known only from a source of doubtful reliability'.

⁵² The *carcer Mamertinus* (formerly called the *carcer Tullianus*) was the most famous public prison in Rome; see no. X (above, p. 266, n. 40).

5. After these days had passed, Laodicius the prefect ordered Sisinnius to be brought into his presence. When he had been brought in by Apronianus, the prison registrar (*commentariensis*),⁵³ there was suddenly a flash of light in the sky, and a voice came from the light, saying: 'Come to me, blessed of my father; receive the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'⁵⁴ Then Apronianus, terrified, fell at the feet of Sisinnius the deacon, saying: 'I swear by the Christ whom you confess, do not delay to baptize me, and to make me arrive with you at the crown [of martyrdom].' In that same hour water was brought,⁵⁵ and he catechized him, and blessed the font, and placed him, pure [i.e. naked] in the basin, and said to him: 'Do you believe in God the Father Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost?' And he replied: 'I believe'. And Sisinnius the deacon said to him, 'May Christ illuminate you.'⁵⁶ And he raised him up from the basin, and led him to St Marcellus the bishop. He [Marcellus] consigned him with anointing⁵⁷ and blessed the altar; and they all partook of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. That same day, in the afternoon, Laodicius ordered Sisinnius the deacon to be brought before him. Arriving with Sisinnius the deacon, Apronianus, the prison registrar, newly baptized, began to shout out, 'Why does the devil compel you to enact such punishments on the servants of God?' Then the prefect said to Apronianus, the prison registrar: 'Do I see that you too have become a Christian?' Apronianus replied: 'Poor me, that I wasted so many of my days (before being baptized)!'. The prefect said to him: 'You are now truly wasting your days!' And he ordered him to undergo capital punishment, saying: 'If this one is not eliminated, many will perish.'⁵⁸ At that same time

⁵³ The *commentariensis* was the official responsible for keeping a record of prisoners and for supervising a staff of torturers, in other words the prison registrar; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 522 and 587; Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, pp. 57–9; and Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, p. 158: 'a rank below the centurionate, found on the office staff of most magistrates; his function was the keeping of records...he was particularly responsible for the custody of those accused, the keeping of records of criminal proceedings, and the supervision of putting into effect any sentence passed.'

⁵⁴ Cf. Matt. 25: 34 ('venite benedicti Patris mei; possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi').

⁵⁵ It has been pointed out by Brandt (*Passiones e battisteri*, p. 111) that the reference to water being brought (*allata aqua*) implies the presence of a nearby baptistery; for another example, see no. XVI (above, p. 337, n. 86).

⁵⁶ The baptismal questions which precede the baptism of Apronianus are listed and discussed by Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen', p. 131 (§ 37).

⁵⁷ The point being that only a bishop could confirm the baptism carried out by a deacon. For this meaning of *consigno*, see *TLL* IV, cols. 437–8 ('apud Christianos: confirmare aliquem sacramento chrismatis, consecrare, signo crucis notare'), and esp. *DACL* III/2, cols. 2515–44 [P. de Puniet], s.v. 'confirmation', and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 247 (*consignatio*). See also the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.10).

⁵⁸ Cf. John 18: 14, the words of Caiphas ('quia expedit unum hominem mori pro populo').

he was led to the second mile of the Via Salaria; he was beheaded on 2 February.⁵⁹

7. Then he [Laodicius] ordered that Saturninus, the old man, and Sisinnius the deacon be placed in custody, saying: 'If they do not sacrifice to the gods, I shall kill them by means of various punishments.' Then, when the aged Saturninus was placed in custody together with Sisinnius, many pagans came to him, and they were baptized in all earnestness. Hearing this, Laodicius the prefect commanded that a tribunal be set up for him in the temple of Tellus.⁶⁰ And after forty-two days he sent (a messenger) and had Saturninus and Sisinnius the deacon presented to him; and they were brought in, bound in chains and barefoot, into the presence of Laodicius the prefect. Laodicius said to them: 'What now? Have you abandoned your empty superstitions, and do you worship the gods whom the emperors worship?' Sisinnius the deacon replied: 'We sinners worship our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God; for we never prostrate ourselves before demons and stone (statues).' Laodicius said: 'Let a tripod be brought and let them burn incense to their majesties.' Saturninus said: 'Let the Lord crush the gods of the pagans!' And immediately the bronze tripod dissolved like clay. Seeing this two soldiers, Papias and Maurus, began to shout out and say: 'The Lord Jesus Christ is truly God, Whom Sisinnius the deacon and Saturninus worship.'

8. Laodicius the prefect was accordingly enraged, and ordered them to be raised up on the rack. And when they had been stretched out with cords, they were beaten with staves and scorpion-whips.⁶¹ They, however, were shouting out, saying, 'Glory to You, Lord Jesus Christ, that we were found worthy to become companions of Your servants!' Then Papias and Maurus shouted out, saying, 'Why does the devil compel you to enact such punishments on the servants of God?' Laodicius, enraged, ordered that their mouths be smashed with stones, and they be thrust back into prison, but that torches be applied to the sides of Saturninus and Sisinnius. They, however, hanging from the rack, were giving thanks to God with a cheerful countenance. On that same day he sentenced them to undergo the death penalty; and having been taken down from the rack they were led along the Via Nomentana, to the second mile, and beheaded. Thrason, together with the priest John, recovered their bodies, and buried them in an estate on the Via Salaria on 28 November.⁶²

⁵⁹ See above, n. 31.

⁶⁰ On the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), near which was located the *Secretarium Tellurens* (the site of tribunals and the offices of the urban prefect), see above, no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

⁶¹ For the 'scorpion-whip' (*scorpio*), see above, no. XVI (p. 339, n. 90).

⁶² The reference to their burial place is to the cemetery of Thrason, which does indeed lie on the Via Salaria Nuova; see above, n. 17. The *Depositio martyrum* records, against 29 (not 28) November, the burial of 'Saturninus, in the cemetery of Thrason' (Appendix I, below, p. 636), and against 29 November the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* commemorates the burial of Saturninus in the cemetery of Thrason (Appendix III, p. 657). There is also an epigram of

9. After twelve days Laodicius the prefect ordered the soldiers Papias and Maurus—who had been baptized by Bishop Marcellus—to be presented to him in the Circus Flaminius;⁶³ when he saw them, he said to them: ‘Now I see that you too are Christians.’ Papias said: ‘Truly Christians.’ Laodicius says to them: ‘Abandon and reject this empty foolishness, and worship the gods whom the emperors worship.’ Maurus replied and said: ‘Let those who despair of their lives worship them, so that they may perish in eternity.’ Laodicius the prefect said: ‘You will now perish if you do not sacrifice to the immortal gods! Listen and do what I say, and live.’ Papias replied: ‘You sacrifice, and you will live in eternal torment.’ Whereupon he ordered them to be stretched out on the ground and beaten with staves. And while they were being beaten, no sound was heard from them except, ‘O Christ, help us, Your servants!’ Then he ordered them to be raised up from the ground and beaten with lead-weighted whips. And while they were being beaten at length, they gave up the ghost. John the priest recovered their bodies at night, and buried them on the Via Nomentana on 29 January,⁶⁴ at the well where St Peter conducted baptisms.⁶⁵

10. After some few days Laodicius the prefect told everything to Diocletian and Maximian the Augusti, concerning the soldiers and saints whom he had executed; and Diocletian and Maximian the Augusti were delighted. Then after a few days it was reported to Diocletian the Augustus that his daughter Artemia was being troubled by a demon; he was saddened with great anxiety and did not wish to eat that day. When the blessed Cyriacus had been a long time in prison and he had been forgotten about, many Christians started to go to him in prison, and blind people had their sight restored, and sick people were cured of their illnesses. Artemia, the daughter of Diocletian, began to be oppressed by the demon. When this was reported to Diocletian the Augustus, he went to her in her bedchamber. And the demon itself shouted out through Artemia, in the presence of Diocletian, saying, ‘Unless Cyriacus the deacon should come, I will not leave.’ Diocletian immediately sent for him in prison, where he was locked up and bound in chains, together with Largus and

Damasus commemorating St Saturninus in this place (Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 188–90 [no. 46]; see n. 23).

⁶³ The Circus Flaminius lay in the southern part of the Campus Martius: see Platner-Ashby, pp. 111–13; Richardson, p. 83; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 221–2; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 266–9 with fig. 66; and A. Viscogliosi, ‘Circus Flaminius’, *LTUR* I, pp. 269–72, with figs. 155–6. It lay adjacent to the Theatre of Marcellus; some remains of the curved end lie in and beneath the Palazzo Caetani in the Piazza Paganica. The Circus Flaminius also figures as the site of a tribunal in the *passio* of the Greek Martyrs (XXVIII.14); see M. C. Cartocci, ‘Circus Flaminius (in fonti agiografiche)’, *LTUR* I, p. 272.

⁶⁴ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* commemorates them against 29 January: ‘Rome, the death of the soldiers Papias and <Maurus>’ (Appendix III, below, p. 651). See BSS X, cols. 317–18 [A. Amore].

⁶⁵ On the *nymphae Petri*, see above, n. 35.

Smaragdus, and released him from prison. And when he had been presented to Diocletian the Augustus, he began to ask him to go in to his daughter.

11. And when he had gone in to her, Cyriacus said: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: I order you to depart from her.' The demon replied through Artemia's mouth, saying: 'If you wish me to depart, give me a vessel into which I can go.' Cyriacus says to it, 'If you can do it, here is my body: enter.' The devil replied through Artemia's mouth: 'I cannot enter into your vessel, which is closed and sealed everywhere.' Cyriacus says to it: 'In the name of our Crucified Lord Jesus Christ, depart, so that the vessel will be pure for serving the Holy Spirit.' And he said to Artemia: 'My girl, believe in God the Father Almighty and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord.' And it shouted out, saying: 'O Cyriacus, if you cast me out of here, I will make you come to Persia.' Cyriacus said to it: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, depart!', and it departed immediately.

12. Then Artemia shouted out, saying: 'Through His name I call you to witness, that you baptize me—for I see from afar the Lord Whom you describe, O Cyriacus.' Then holding her hand, the blessed Largus and Smaragdus lifted her up. The next day, according to custom, they catechized her, in the presence of her mother, Serena Augusta,⁶⁶ in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. From that day forth Serena used to say to her daughter that she faithfully loved the Christian religion. After two years and ten months, when the Baths had been built with distinction, Diocletian began to treat Cyriacus the deacon respectfully, and gave him a house.⁶⁷ And he issued the command that Cyriacus be allowed to live safely in Rome through the favour of Serena Augusta, the wife of Diocletian.

13. But after a short time an embassy came from the king of the Persians to Diocletian the Augustus, asking that he send Cyriacus the deacon to him, because his daughter was being troubled by a demon. Diocletian the Augustus, considering this great request by Sapor, king of the Persians,⁶⁸ ordered Serena

⁶⁶ The wife of Diocletian was named Prisca, and their only daughter was named Valeria (PLRE I, p. 254). The only woman named Serena attested in PLRE was the daughter of Honorius and the wife of Stilicho in the years 384–408 (p. 824). The name Serena borne by Diocletian's wife was evidently lifted from the *passio* of St Susanna (XV.24–9), as was the information that Maximian was the (adoptive) son of Diocletian (XV.2).

⁶⁷ The author of the *passio* later states that the *domus* of Cyriacus was near to the Baths of Diocletian (see below, c. 15). The *domus* is arguably the same site as the *titulus*-church of St Cyriacus (see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 75–7, and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 594), but the location of this church has never been convincingly identified. See G. De Spirito, 'Domus Cyriaci', *LTUR* II, pp. 90–1.

⁶⁸ Sapor (more accurately Shāpūr) is the name borne by several Persian kings during these centuries (in Iranian the name means 'son of a king'), although none of them overlapped with, or had relations with, Diocletian: Shapur I (240–70), who was famous for defeating the Romans at Edessa and capturing the emperor Valerian; Shapur II (309–79), 'the Great', the longest-reigning Persian king; Shapur III (383–8), and Shapur IV (420). See *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III. *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. E. Yarshater, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1983), I, pp. 124–7

his wife to ask Cyriacus the deacon to come to her. And when Cyriacus had come to Serena Augusta, she told him about the embassy of Sapor, king of the Persians, as Diocletian the Augustus, her husband, had reported it to her. Cyriacus the deacon said to her, 'With the assistance of my Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour I shall go in safety.' At that same time Serena Augusta, a most Christian lady, granted him all (means of) transportation,⁶⁹ and placed everything which was necessary to him in a ship, and Largus and Smaragdus went with him to Persia. The soldiers were travelling with post-horses, but St Cyriacus, with his crutch, arrived first at the (royal) residence when he journeyed to Sapor, king of the Persians.

14. And when Cyriacus the deacon, and Largus and Smaragdus, had been presented, the king said to them: 'Who among you is called Cyriacus the deacon?' And when he identified who he was, he showed him great respect, and asked that he go in to the bedchamber of his daughter, named Iobia. In that same hour the devil shouted out through the mouth of the girl, and said to Cyriacus: 'What is it, Cyriacus?' Cyriacus replied: 'In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I command you, foul spirit, to go and never to return to her.' The devil replied: 'You're exhausted.' Cyriacus replied: 'I came out here in the name of Jesus Christ, through Whose assistance I have been and now am guided, and I am not exhausted, <but am governed (by Him) in every way>.'⁷⁰ The devil says to him: 'Yet I brought you (here) to do what I wished.' Cyriacus, when he saw that the girl was being exhausted, threw himself on the ground, praying and weeping, and saying, 'The Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I confess, orders you to depart.' The devil replied: 'Give me a vessel into which I may go.' Cyriacus said: 'The Lord Jesus Christ, God from heaven Himself, commands you to depart.' And then with great wailing, frothing with a roar, the devil spoke into the air: 'O terrifying name, Who compel me to depart!' From that same moment Iobia was rendered safe.

15. Then the blessed Cyriacus said to her: 'Believe, my girl, in the Son of God and you will always be saved.' Iobia replied: 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ Whom you are preaching about.' And he made her a catechumen in the usual way, and catechized her. And when water had been fetched, he placed her in a silver basin, and blessed the water, and said to her: 'Iobia, do you believe in God the Father and Son and Holy Ghost?' She replied, 'I believe.' And he said to her, 'Do you believe in the resurrection of the flesh?' She replied: 'I believe.' When raised up from the basin, Iobia began to say: 'Truly

(Shapur I), 132–41 (Shapur II), and 141–3 (Shapur III). Shapur II, in particular, was a notorious persecutor of Christians (p. 139). The author, in other words, has simply chosen a recognizable name for a Persian king, without worrying about the chronological implications.

⁶⁹ The implication is that she provided a military escort and gave him a warrant (called an *evectio*) to use the imperial *cursus publicus*, on which see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 830–4.

⁷⁰ The words 'but am governed (by Him) in every way' (*sed in omnibus gubernor*) are omitted from Bolland's edition.

the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom blessed Cyriacus proclaims, is God Himself.⁷¹ On that same day all her neighbours were baptized, and the king himself was baptized, and another 420 persons of both sexes were likewise baptized. At that time the king offered many gifts and money to the blessed Cyriacus; he replied to him, 'We do not offer the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for a price, but rather we value Him according to our faith', and he accepted nothing, but together with Largus and Smaragdus used only bread and water. Getting back on the ship after forty-five days, with many letters of recommendation, they returned to Rome. Diocletian the Augustus, with his wife and daughter, received him [Cyriacus] with great honour. And he began to live with Largus and Smaragdus in that house which Diocletian himself had given him by way of a gift, next to the Baths of Diocletian.

16. After two months Diocletian set off for Dalmatia; and exhausted by illness, he made his will. He made his sons his heirs, and died.⁷² On hearing this, Maximian the Augustus ordered that Christians, wherever they might be discovered, should be punished. And driven by jealousy on account of his sister Artemia, he arrested Cyriacus the deacon, and put him in prison. And he ordered that, on the day of his procession, as an example for other Christians, Cyriacus should be dragged naked, bound in chains, in front of his chariot.⁷³

17. Arriving at the same time as the day of the procession, Bishop Marcellus presented himself to Maximian the Augustus, saying to him: 'I commend to Your Majesty the servants of God, who pray for your realm and for the state: why do you slaughter them?' Then, in a rage, Maximian the Augustus ordered that Bishop Marcellus be beaten with staves, and driven out;⁷⁴ and he gave the order to Carpasius, the deputy (*uicarius*):⁷⁵ 'Listen, Carpasius: punish with various tortures the sacrilegious Cyriacus, who with

⁷¹ The baptismal questions which precede the baptism of Iobia are listed and discussed by Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen', p. 131 (§ 38).

⁷² Diocletian was not normally resident in Rome (his preferred residence seems to have been Nicomedia in Bithynia), but he visited Rome briefly in 303 on the occasion of his *vicennalia*, and left soon afterwards (see Barnes, *The New Empire*, p. 56). He abdicated on 1 May 305, and retired to *Salonae* (modern Split) in Dalmatia, where he died in 313. On abdication he named Galerius as Augustus, and appointed a new Caesar, Maximinus, to replace Galerius (Jones, *LRE*, p. 40). The (false) notion that Maximian was the son of Diocletian derives not from historical sources but from the *passio* of St Susanna (XV.2).

⁷³ The (rare) word *rheda* (correctly spelled *raeda*) is probably a loanword from Celtic used to describe a four-wheeled chariot; cf. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* iii. 17. 1–3 ('curriculi genus est memorat quod Gallia raedam / molliter incedens orbita sulcat humum / exiliens duplici biuigo volat axe citato').

⁷⁴ It is possible that this expression (*expelleretur*) refers obliquely to the exile which was imposed on Marcellus by Maxentius (not Maximian), alluded to by Damasus in the epigram quoted above (p. 392, and n. 7).

⁷⁵ No deputy (*uicarius*) named Carpasius, whether of the urban prefect or praetorian prefect responsible for suburbicarian Italy, is attested during the period 260–395: see *PLRE* I, pp. 1077–9.

magic chants and incantations persuades men to confess Christ, if he will not offer libations to the gods.'

18. At that same time Carpasius the deputy sent (a messenger) to the prison, and brought out Cyriacus the deacon, and Largus and Smaragdus and Crescentianus, and ordered them to be brought before him at the temple of Tellus.⁷⁶ He said to them: 'Why do you not listen to the orders of our emperors and offer libations to the immortal gods?' Cyriacus replied, (in unison) with Largus and Smaragdus and Crescentianus: 'We offer ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ.' Carpasius the deputy said: 'Do what is commanded of you! Your hair is white with old age, Cyriacus; but now I will make it young again.' And he ordered that some pitch be melted, and when the pitch had been melted, he ordered that it be poured over the head of Cyriacus the deacon. The blessed Cyriacus began to shout out and to say: 'Glory to You, O Lord, Who have deigned to allow us Your servants to enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom!'

19. Carpasius said to the others: 'Sacrifice, or you will perish like the treacherous Cyriacus.' They said: 'We sinners offer ourselves as sacrifice to our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then Carpasius brought into their sight the rack, and ordered Crescentianus to be strung up and beaten with staves in the sight of Cyriacus, Largus, and Smaragdus. And when he had been stretched out a long time with cords and (beaten with) staves, and raked with claws, he shouted out in a loud voice: 'Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to call us to Your mercy.' Carpasius said, 'Put torches on his sides.' And when he had been burned while held in check for a long time, he gave up the ghost. He [Carpasius] ordered his body to be cast out at the base of Bear's Hill [*Clivus Ursi*],⁷⁷ in the square in front of the Palace temple.⁷⁸ That night John, the priest, came and recovered the body and buried it in the catacomb on the Via Salaria, on 24 November.⁷⁹

20. After the death of Crescentianus, he [Carpasius] thrust Largus and Smaragdus and Cyriacus into prison. But after four days he resumed his hearing again in the same place in the temple of Tellus, and ordered Cyriacus

⁷⁶ On the temple of Tellus, see above, n. 60. Since the offices of the urban prefecture were located next to the temple of Tellus, the implication here is that Carpasius is the 'deputy' of the urban, rather than of the praetorian, prefect.

⁷⁷ This *Clivus Ursi* is mentioned uniquely here in this *passio*. Judging from context, it seems to refer to the slopes of the Palatine; see G. De Spirito, 'Clivus Ursi', *LTUR* V, pp. 238–9. It has also been suggested that *Ursi* is a corruption of *Urbius*, in which case the reference would be to the road leading up the Esquiline. But the following reference to the *templum Palatii* suggests instead that by *Clivus Ursi* is meant the *Clivus Palatinus*, the road which ascended the northern side of the Palatine. See F. Coarelli, 'Clivus Orbius, Urbius', *LTUR* I, p. 283, and A. Cassatella, 'Clivus Palatinus', *LTUR* I, pp. 283–4.

⁷⁸ The reference to a *templum palatii* is too vague to permit certain identification; possibly the phrase is a corruption of *templum Palladis* (variant readings *Palladii*, *Pallaria*), one of the many temples on the Palatine (cf. previous note).

⁷⁹ The burial of Crescentianus is not recorded against this date in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*; but see below, n. 83.

the deacon to be brought before him; he said to him: 'Why are you taking the remaining days of your old age off to hell under torture?' Cyriacus said: 'I have always hoped for this.' Carpasius says to him: 'Sacrifice to the immortal gods, and you will live.' Cyriacus replied, 'Let those who have not recognized their Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, sacrifice to them.' When the exceedingly wicked deputy Carpasius heard this, he was greatly angered, and ordered him to be stretched out on a scaffold and drawn tight with cords, and beaten with staves. Cyriacus was shouting out, saying: 'Have mercy on me, a sinner, Lord Jesus Christ.' That same day Carpasius the deputy reported to Maximian the Augustus everything he had done to the saints of God. Whereupon Maximian, in a rage, ordered that all those who were held in custody with Cyriacus the deacon should be beheaded. And when the sentence was passed, twenty-one people of both sexes were led out with Cyriacus the deacon and beheaded on the Via Salaria inside the Baths of Sallust, outside the walls.⁸⁰ John the priest recovered their bodies at night, and buried them on the same road; but he recovered St Cyriacus and interred him on 26 March. At this same time, Maximian killed his sister Artemia.

21. Arriving after eight days with the Christian matron Lucina, St Marcellus the bishop embalmed the bodies of the saints with spices and linen sheets, and, with (the help of) his eunuchs, placed them at night in a cart,⁸¹ and raised them up from where they had been buried. The bodies were transported, together with (that of) St Cyriacus, to her estate on the Via Ostiense, at the seventh mile from Rome,⁸² where they rest in stone sarcophagi. The blessed Lucina buried them in peace with her own hand, on 7 August.⁸³

22. At that same time the blessed Lucina made a donation from her property to the catholic church. On hearing this, Maximian in his indignation condemned her by issuing a warrant. The blessed Lucina asked St Marcellus, the bishop, to consecrate her house as a church; St Marcellus did this with

⁸⁰ This topographical notice is confused. The Baths of Sallust were located on the right-hand side of the Via Salaria, just before the road passes through the Aurelian walls at the Porta Salaria; see G. De Spirito, 'Thermae Sallusti / Sallustianae', *LTUR* V, pp. 63–4. They were not, therefore, outside the walls (*foras muros*), as is stated here. The Baths of Sallust are also mentioned as forming part of the palace-complex in the 'Gardens of Sallust' in the *passio* of SS. Polychronius and others (XVI.27).

⁸¹ On the word *pauo*, a 'wheelbarrow-shaped bier', see Niermeyer, p. 777. The word is not listed in *TLL*.

⁸² On the cemetery at the seventh mile of the Via Ostiense, see F. Tommasi, 'Nuovi elementi riguardanti il cimitero di S. Ciriaco sulla via Ostiense', *RACr* 73 (1997), 493–524; C. Noviello, 'Ulteriori elementi sul cimitero di S. Ciriaco presso la via Ostiense. A proposito del recupero di un frammento damasiano', *RACr* 74 (1998), 281–95; F. Tommasi, 'S. Cyriaci ecclesia', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 180–4; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 217–22.

⁸³ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has, against 8 (not 7) August, the following entry: 'Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Ostiense, Cyriacus, Largus, Crescentianus, Memmia, Juliana, Smaragdus' (Appendix III, below, p. 655).

every devotion.⁸⁴ But when he frequently celebrated mass in the same house, in the middle of the city on the Via Lata,⁸⁵ and Maximian heard of this, in a rage he ordered that planks be put down in the same church for the (draught) animals of the public transport,⁸⁶ and assigned the same Bishop Marcellus to care for the animals while in public custody, where after many years' service, dressed only in a hair shirt, he gave up the ghost on 16 January.⁸⁷ John the priest, together with the blessed Lucina, took away his body at night, and embalmed it with spices, and buried it in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria (Nuova), not far from Rome at the third mile, where he now lies in peace.⁸⁸

23. At the same time Maximian the Augustus ordered Carpasius the deputy to come to him, and he questioned him concerning the trial and execution of Christians. And when he saw that Maximian was pleased with him, he sought from him the house of St Cyriacus the deacon. And when he entered the house which Diocletian the Augustus had granted to St Cyriacus, he found the place where St Cyriacus had constructed a font,⁸⁹ which St Marcellus, the bishop, had consecrated,⁹⁰ in which St Cyriacus frequently baptized those coming to him in the faith. And so Carpasius the deputy, a hard-hearted pagan, entered into the same house. When he had entered and discovered the baptistery, he had constructed in the same place a plunge pool, as if to mock the customs of

⁸⁴ The point is that Lucina has conveyed her house to Pope Marcellus (and the Church) by means of title-deed, so that the church henceforth became known as the *titulus Marcelli*, on which see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 77–80; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', pp. 235–8; and Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 308. Given that a warrant had been issued for her arrest (and inevitable condemnation and execution, given that she was a Christian), Lucina effected this transfer of her property in order to prevent it from being confiscated by the imperial treasury as *bona damnatorum*.

⁸⁵ On the church of S. Marcello al Corso, see above, n. 13.

⁸⁶ The stables (*catabulum*) of the imperial post (*cursus publicus*) were located on the Via Lata, close to the *titulus*-church of S. Marcello, but on the left-hand side of the Via Lata; see F. Coarelli, 'Catabulum', *LTUR* I, p. 256, who stresses the unique importance of the present reference. On the Greek loanword *catabulum*, see Souter, p. 42, and *TLL* III, col. 586.

⁸⁷ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* records the burial of Marcellus against 16 January: 'Rome, on the Via Salaria, in the cemetery of Priscilla, the burial of St Marcellus, bishop and confessor' (Appendix III, below, p. 651).

⁸⁸ The cemetery of Priscilla is one of the largest and best-known cemeteries in Rome; see the comprehensive excavation report by Francesco Tolotti, *Il cimitero di Priscilla*, as well as the more concise accounts by Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 461–558; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 254–60; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 130–7; R. Giuliani, 'Priscillae coemeterium', *LTUR*, Suburbium IV, pp. 262–9; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 59–73.

⁸⁹ On the house (*domus*) of Cyriacus, see above, nn. 26 and 67.

⁹⁰ Since the *domus* of Cyriacus cannot be identified, nothing can be known of the baptismal font which it housed. But there was also a large and elegant marble-lined baptismal font in the church of St Marcellus, which is discussed in detail by Krautheimer (*CBCR* II, pp. 211–13), who thought it early medieval rather than late antique (pp. 214–15); but see A. Nestori, 'Il battistero paleocristiano di S. Marcello. Nuove scoperte', *RACr* 58 (1982), 81–126, who plausibly suggests that the author of the present *passio* has confused the baptistery at the *domus* (subsequently *titulus*-church) of St Cyriacus with the font in S. Marcello (pp. 85–6), which Nestori dates to the late fourth or early fifth century (p. 107).

the Christians, and there he frequently used the pool for parties with whores and actresses, making disgusting use of a place which had been consecrated. And while these things were taking place, and on a certain day they had bathed and were proceeding to the feast, as Carpasius was getting out of the pool with many wicked accomplices, suddenly nineteen of them fell down with him and were dead. That same day they closed the pool, and there is great fear in that neighbourhood up to the present day.

24. The bodies of the saints—that is Cyriacus, Largus and Smaragdus, Crescentianus, Memmia, and Juliana—were buried on the Via Ostiense, more or less at the eighth mile from Rome,⁹¹ where prayers for them are still effective, with our Lord Jesus Christ reigning, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁹¹ See the entry from the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* quoted above (p. 396 and n. 25).

XXI

SS. Primus and Felicianus

c.550 × 600 (?); relevant to the (unidentified) cemetery and basilica of SS. Primus and Felicianus at *Nomentum* (Mentana), at the fourteenth mile of the Via Nomentana

The *passio* of SS. Primus and Felicianus concerns two Roman citizens who, as a result of their refusal to sacrifice at the time of the ‘Great Persecution’, were brought before Diocletian and Maximian, who handed them over to the governor of the town of *Nomentum* (present-day Mentana), at the thirteenth mile from Rome on the Via Nomentana; at the governor’s orders they were tortured and executed, and then buried by fellow Christians outside *Nomentum*, at the fourteenth mile from Rome.¹ Although they are not, on a strict definition of the term, *Roman* martyrs, they were natives of Rome, and their remains were translated from *Nomentum* to the church of S. Stefano Rotondo on the Caelian by Pope Theodore (642–9),² where they were subsequently venerated. It is therefore appropriate to include them in a collection of *passiones* of Roman martyrs.

The narrative is as follows. In the days when the tempest of persecution was raging against Christians, Primus and Felicianus were accused before Diocletian and Maximian of refusing to sacrifice, and so bringing the gods into disrepute; they were accordingly bound in chains and put in prison, where, however, they were comforted by an angel of the Lord (c. 1). They were next summoned to appear before the emperors, who, after much debate on the uselessness or otherwise of the gods, ordered them to be taken to the temple of Hercules

¹ Listed *BHL* 6922 and *CPL* 2222; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, p. 213; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, pp. 139–40; *DACL* XII/2, cols. 1469–78 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* X, cols. 1104–6 [A. Amore]; Passigli, ‘Una questione di topografia cristiana’, pp. 313–15; Saxer, ‘Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie’, pp. 24–6; Flocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 432–7; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 246–50; A. M. Nieddu, ‘Mentana. SS. Primo e Feliciano’, in *Santuari d’Italia: Lazio*, ed. S. Boesch Gajano et al. (Rome, 2010), pp. 240–1; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 83–5.

² *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 180; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 332; trans. Davis, p. 70: ‘At that time the bodies of the martyrs Saints Primus and Felician, which were buried in the *arenarium* on the Via Nomentana, were lifted and brought into Rome; they were deposited in the church of St Stephen the first martyr.’

and compelled to sacrifice there; they refused (c. 2). They were therefore handed over to Promotus, the governor at *Nomentum*, at the thirteenth mile from Rome, who set up a tribunal in the town forum, and ordered them to sacrifice, but they spurned his orders (c. 3). The governor separated them, and, after arguing at length with Felicianus, sentenced him to be tortured by being stretched out on a wooden frame and to have nails driven into him; he was left hanging there for three days and nights (c. 4). Primus was then brought before the governor; after Primus explained to him the nature of his belief and continued to refuse to sacrifice, the governor sentenced him to have molten lead poured down his throat, which he drank as if it were ice water (c. 5). Then the governor sentenced them to be taken to the local amphitheatre, and to be exposed to beasts; but two savage lions rolled gently about their feet, without harming them, and some ferocious bears subsequently did likewise (c. 6). On the governor's orders they were then taken outside the amphitheatre and decapitated; although their bodies were left for the dogs, they were recovered by Christians and buried in a nearby catacomb, over which a basilica was built in their honour, at the fourteenth mile of the Via Nomentana (c. 7).

A striking feature of the *passio* is the author's familiarity with the ancient town of *Nomentum*: he is conversant with its forum, amphitheatre, retaining wall, and the basilica and catacomb in which the two martyrs were originally buried (see accompanying notes). The implication of this familiarity is that the author was a resident of *Nomentum*, perhaps a cleric of the basilica of SS. Primus and Felicianus, and that he composed the *passio* in honour of the two local saints. In various ways the *passio* stands apart from other *passiones* certainly composed at Rome: the author's concern to reproduce court procedure, as when the martyrs are brought before the governor's tribunal in *Nomentum* and are ushered in with the formal words, 'Let the accused persons be brought in' (*intromittantur personae*); or the exaggerated number of tortures which the martyrs undergo, without apparently suffering any ill effects, such as, in the case of Primus, having molten lead poured down his throat (in most Roman *passiones*, the martyr is simply flogged at length and then dies). Such exaggerated tortures are more characteristic of Greek *passiones*.³ In any case, the *passio* must have been composed before the martyrs' remains were translated from *Nomentum* to S. Stefano Rotondo on the Caelian during the pontificate of Theodore (642–9), and is probably to be dated to the later sixth (or, less likely, the fifth) century.

Text. The *passio* of SS. Primus and Felicianus circulated in a substantial number of manuscripts: *BHLms* lists some ninety-two manuscripts, to which

³ See Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 202–7; at p. 202, the *passio* of SS. Primus and Felicianus is listed among a number of (mostly Greek) *passiones* which contain descriptions of absurdly cruel (and imaginary) tortures.

Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further twenty-seven.⁴ The text translated here is that printed by the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Iunii II* [1698], pp. 152–4.

1. In the days of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian,⁵ a savage tempest had arisen against the Christians, such that, whoever was discovered to be a follower of that path, and would not consent to (sacrifice to) the idols, would be punished by various and different tortures. Therefore the holy men Primus and Felicianus, persevering in their belief in Christ, were accused before Diocletian and Maximian by the priests of the (pagan) temples, saying: ‘The gods refuse to give replies to us, saying: “Unless you compel Primus and Felicianus to sacrifice, you will be unable to receive any benefits from us”. Help us, therefore, and also your empire, so that we do not perish.’ Then Diocletian and Maximian ordered soldiers to search painstakingly for them, and to arrest them; for they were Roman citizens. And when they had been sought out, they were seized by the soldiers, who took them to the emperors, who ordered them to be bound in chains and put in prison. And when they had been bound for the name of Christ, an angel of the Lord appeared before them, who comforted them, and freed them from the chains by which they were bound. And the blessed martyrs said: ‘We bless you, O Lord our God, because You have comforted us Your servants, and have dissolved our chains through the agency of Your angel, just as You did with St Peter Your Apostle.’⁶ And we beseech You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You do not allow us to be remote from his merits.’

2. But after some days, the emperors ordered them to be brought to them in person.⁷ And when the blessed martyrs Primus and Felicianus were brought in, the announcement was made:⁸ ‘They are here’. And the emperors said to them: ‘Are you the ones who scorn our commands, and reckon them at naught?’ The holy martyrs said: ‘And we have always reckoned them at naught.’ The emperors said: ‘We bear your insults patiently: (now) sacrifice to the gods Hercules and Jupiter, and do not forfeit the dignity of your high birth.’ The blessed martyrs said: ‘In the odour of sweetness we offer the sacrifice of propitiation and praise to God; and we do not consort with the works of darkness, in which you are participants.’ The emperors said: ‘Come forward and sacrifice to

⁴ ‘Hagiographie’, p. 248.

⁵ The ‘days of Diocletian and Maximian’ could refer to any time between 285 (when Maximian was made Caesar by Diocletian) or 286 (when Maximian was promoted to Augustus), and 305, when both men abdicated; the ‘savage tempest...against the Christians’ evidently refers to the so-called ‘Great Persecution’, which began with the proclamation of the ‘First Edict’ of persecution in Nicomedia on 23 February 303. The implication is that the events of the *passio* are conceived as taking place during the period 303–5.

⁶ Acts 12: 6–11.

⁷ The unique occasion on which the two emperors were together in Rome was that of Diocletian’s *vicennalia* in November and December 303: see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 56 and 59. The notion of the two Augusti giving a private interview to two Christians is absurd.

⁸ The official who controlled admission to the emperor was the *magister admissionum* (see Jones, *LRE*, p. 334); it was either he, or the court herald (*praeco*), who made the announcement.

the unconquerable gods Hercules and Jupiter; if not, torturers will viciously tear you to pieces.' The blessed martyrs said: 'We do not fear to undergo tortures for the name of Christ, so that we can arrive at the crown of martyrdom; but rather we freely embrace them, so that we can be worthy to share in His promises.' The emperors said: 'Let these words stop, and offer your libations to the gods, and call them to your assistance.' The saintly martyrs Primus and Felicianus said: 'We are amazed at your foolishness. How can we call to our assistance stones and wood, which were created in such unfortunate circumstances that, unless they were assisted by men, and unless they were strongly propped up by iron and lead, they could not stand up at all; and unless they were guarded by dogs, they would be stolen by thieves at night? And, knowing these things, why are you so blind?' Then Diocletian and Maximian were angered, and they ordered soldiers to lead them to the temple of Hercules;⁹ and, if they did not wish to sacrifice, to punish them severely with torture. And the soldiers, collecting them, took them to the temple of Hercules in accordance with the orders of the emperors. And since they could not influence them with any reasonable argument, but they were choosing rather to die than to live, they stretched them out (on the rack), and flailed them furiously with whips, saying to them: 'Why do you not obey the decrees of the emperors, and sacrifice to the omnipotent gods?' The martyrs said: 'We must obey the Heavenly Emperor, Who has the power to destroy both body and soul in hell. The inextinguishable fire of hell will receive your earthly emperors, who worship pointless and meaningless idols.'

3. And when the soldiers had reported to the emperors what had happened, they were greatly enraged and ordered them to be handed over to Promotus, the governor (*praeses*)¹⁰ of the town of *Numentana*,¹¹ so that he could torture

⁹ There were numerous temples dedicated to Hercules, both in Rome and on the roads leading out of Rome. Some sixteen intra-urban temples are described in *LTUR* III, pp. 11–25, including the famous temple to Hercules Invictus in the Forum Boarium; and suburban temples dedicated to Hercules were located on the Via Appia (two), Via Tiburtina, and Via Portuense: see *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 52–61. Without further specification, it is not possible to identify the temple which the author has in mind.

¹⁰ There were various ranks of provincial governors—proconsuls, consulars, *correctores*, and *praesides*. Promotus, who is described specifically as a *praeses*, belonged to the lowest of these ranks. Mentana was in the Roman province of Valeria (a province which was first created in 399), which occupied an area to the north and east of Rome, south of the Tiber. According to the *Notitia dignitatum*, the governor of Valeria was indeed a *praeses*; see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1454. In this one respect, at least, the author of the *passio* has provided accurate information. Unfortunately, no governor (*praeses*) named Promotus is recorded in historical sources: see Thomasson, *Laterculi Praesidium* III, cols. 85–139 [*indices: nomina virorum*], at 125; but a man named Flavius Promotus was *magister militum* in the East, 386–91 (*PLRE* I, p. 750).

¹¹ Although the author of the *passio* consistently refers to the town as *Numentana*, ancient historians, drawing on a wider range of sources, adopt the form *Nomentum*, and I follow this practice here. The site of the ancient Roman town of *Nomentum* has been identified, partly by excavation, partly by reference to an early seventeenth-century map drawn by Francesco Peperelli, in the close vicinity of the present-day town of Mentana (in fact ancient *Nomentum* lay 1.5 km south of Mentana); see Corrado Pala, *Nomentum*, Forma Italiae, Regio I, 12 (Rome,

them severely; and, if they refused to offer libations to the gods, he would order them to be executed. And the soldiers, taking them, led them bound in chains along the road which is called the Via Nomentana, to the thirteenth mile (from Rome);¹² and they placed them in a prison near to the town forum. But the blessed martyrs Primus and Felicianus did not cease from prayer and hymn-singing; chanting psalms to the Lord, saying: 'Because of the glory of Your Name, O Lord, release us; and, through Your Name, be forgiving of our sins, so that the pagans cannot say, "Where is their God?"' They were refreshed daily by an angel of the Lord, and they continued to thank the Lord. But after the passage of much time, Promotus the governor ordered that a tribunal be set up for him in the forum of the town of *Nomentum*;¹³ and, sitting in tribunal, he said: 'Let the accused persons be brought in.' And when the saintly Primus and Felicianus had been brought in, the governor said to them: 'In accordance with the commands of our lords, sacrifice to the gods, whom divinity declares are mighty.' The holy martyrs said: 'Do not say "our lords", but (rather) say, "our wretches", who execute those believing in Christ, and worship stones and wood. For how can your gods—who do not speak to those addressing them, do not see those observing them, nor will ever be seen (by anyone)—offer you benefits?'

4. On hearing this the governor ordered that they be separated one from the other, thinking that through torture they could be shifted from their determination, and thus induced to sacrifice. And when the blessed Primus had been taken aside, the governor said to the blessed Felicianus: 'Consider your old age, and sacrifice to the unconquerable Jupiter, in accordance with the commands of our lords.' The blessed Felicianus replied: 'My Lord God will consider my old age, Who from my youth has preserved me in the faith of His name, and will henceforth deign to preserve me. Because your threats can strike earthly terror into me, but in no way can they change my mind.' In a rage the governor ordered him to be severely beaten with lead-weighted whips. But afterwards, when he had been raised up, he said to him: 'Why do you not abandon this mental madness, and choose happy and agreeable times, and not weaken your body with various tortures?' The blessed Felicianus said: 'I am eighty years old, and it is thirty years since I recognized God's truth, and chose to live well in Christ, Who will free me from the hands of your cruelty.' And

1976), esp. pp. 11–18; Passigli, 'Una questione di topografia cristiana', esp. 326–8 (who draws attention to the importance of Peperelli's map); and Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 429–42.

¹² Cf. Z. Mari, 'Nomentana, Via', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 96–117, at 117 (Mari's treatment does not, however, extend beyond the sixth mile of the Via Nomentana).

¹³ The site of the *forum civitatis* of ancient *Nomentum* has been localized in the zone of the present-day Romitorio: see Pala, *Nomentum*, *Forma Italiae*, Regio I, 12 (Rome, 1976), pp. 29–37, with map after p. 20, and Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 433–4, with fig. 437 (based on the map of Pala).

when he had said many things similar to these, the governor ordered him to be tied to a wooden frame, and for sharp nails to be driven into his hands and feet. And the insane governor said: 'You will stay fixed in place until you render due obeisance to the immortal gods.' To this St Felicianus, being fixed in his love of the Lord, hanging from the wooden frame with a joyous expression on his face, chanted psalms to the Lord, saying: 'In God I shall hope, I will not fear what man can do to me'.¹⁴ The governor says to him: 'Wretch, abandon this mental vanity, and deny that you are a Christian, and free yourself from the various tortures which are being prepared for you.' St Felicianus replied to him, saying: 'O unhappy man, and most miserable of all men: am I to deny my Creator, "Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things which are in them?"¹⁵ And how can I deny Him, and adore gods (who are) empty tree trunks?' Then the governor, filled with fury, ordered him to be tortured at length. But St Felicianus said: 'I give thanks to You, Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of the true and living God, because I was found worthy to be counted in the society of those who arrived at the crown of martyrdom for Your name.' The angry governor ordered him to remain on the frame for three days and nights, and to be given neither water nor bread, saying: 'Let him die thus.' But when three days and three nights had passed, and St Felicianus was persevering in praise of God, having been nourished with heavenly food, he said: 'Be thou my helper, forsake me not, do not despise me, God of my salvation.'¹⁶ But the governor, filled with fury, ordered him to be lashed with whips, and so to be taken down from the wooden frame, and to be remanded in custody; and he ordered that no one at all was to go in to (see) him.

5. The next day he ordered the blessed Primus to be presented to him. And when he had been brought in, Promotus the governor said to him: 'Behold your brother, consenting to the emperors' commands and sacrificing to the omnipotent gods, is now a companion of the august emperors, and a lord within their palace. Whence if you will similarly consent and sacrifice to the unconquerable gods, you will both be companions of the august emperors.' St Primus replied: 'Although you are the son of the devil, yet you make it clear that my brother would consent to the Heavenly Emperor, and not to silly men, who do not wish to place their hopes in the Lord, and therefore their souls will undergo destruction and death; and now, as if attempting to persuade me, you contemplate untruthful fictions; for those who accept the Holy Spirit cannot be ignorant of anything. For you have put the blessed Felicianus, whom you wearied with tortures and could not shift from his conviction, in prison; and he, as if he were in Paradise, is rejoicing in the name of the Lord. And yet, however many punishments and beatings you inflicted on him were reported

¹⁴ Cf. Ps. 55: 11 ('in Deo speravi, non timebo quid faciat mihi homo').

¹⁵ Acts 4: 24.

¹⁶ Ps. 26: 9.

to me today by an angel of the Lord: whence I did not deserve to be separated from his suffering.’ Then (the governor) ordered him to be beaten with very strong staves, until he would agree to sacrifice. And when he was being beaten, the blessed Primus replied: ‘Even though you have my body in your power, no one except God alone has my soul in His power.’ Again the governor said to him: ‘Come and sacrifice to the gods’. St Primus said: ‘You, and all those who assist you, sacrifice to your gods; and I shall offer to my God a sacrifice and offering of supplication.’ The governor said once again to the soldiers that his sides were to be burned with torches. And when they had raised him up on to the rack, and were burning his body with torches, the blessed and glorious martyr chanted psalms, saying: “‘You have tested us by fire, just as silver is tested’;¹⁷ “And I shall not die, but shall live, and I will tell of the works of the Lord”.¹⁸ And I bless You, O Lord Jesus Christ, because by believing in You I feel nothing of what the agents of the devil inflict on me.’ And while the governor listened to these things, because he understood nothing he said to his (soldiers): ‘I think that the gods have revealed their might to men, or else this man is overcoming everything through sorcery.’ To this St Primus said: ‘Do you presume to impute to sorcery what Christ has deigned to bestow on His servants in praise of His name?’ And he ordered him to be taken down from the rack, and ordered that some lead be melted, and, when he had been stretched out on a bed, ordered that the molten lead be poured into his mouth, so that all his inner organs would be consumed;¹⁹ and he ordered that St Felicianus be present, so that, terrified by his suffering, he might agree to sacrifice. And when the blessed Primus had been stretched out, he drank the lead they were pouring as if it were ice-cold water; and he chanted psalms to the Lord, and said: ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity’;²⁰ and again, ‘How sweet are your words to my palate, more than honey to my mouth’.²¹

6. And the blessed Primus said to the governor: ‘Behold, he is not separated from me—(my brother) of whom you promised and said to me that he consented (to sacrifice) to your mortal gods. Here he is, trusting in the Lord, because He shall free us from all the punishments which we suffer for His name. For all things which are visible have their season; the things which God prepared for those who love Him are eternal. Notice that we are brought together in the glory of redemption: no enemy will deceive us with trickery, nor will any darkness of shadows steal Christ away from us.’ The governor says to him: ‘Sacrifice to the gods, and offer your libations: for (otherwise)

¹⁷ Ps. 65: 10. ¹⁸ Ps. 117: 17.

¹⁹ For this horrific practice—which is described uniquely here among the Roman *passiones martyrum*—see *Codex Theodosianus* ix. 24. 1. 1 (where the origin of the practice is ascribed to Constantine). Delehaye mentions some examples from Greek *passiones* (*Les passions des martyrs*, p. 205).

²⁰ Ps. 132: 1. ²¹ Ps. 118: 103.

I shall have you savaged by the lacerations of wild beasts.’ The blessed martyrs said: ‘Listen to us, and be sensible, and come back from the dead and perishable demons, and believe in the true and living God, in Jesus Christ His Son, so that your soul may be saved.’ Then the governor, inflamed with fury, said to Felicianus: ‘Why do you persist in madness, (to be) destroyed like this one [Primus]? Step up and sacrifice.’ St Felicianus said: ‘He [Primus] is not destroyed; but if you were to assent to his words, you would be found worthy to enter into the power of the Lord. But because your father, the devil, hardened you, you will have passage into the eternal flames.’ And when the governor was put in mental anguish (about this), he ordered them to be led to the amphitheatre, which is near the forum of the town of *Nomentum*,²² and, sitting in tribunal, he ordered that two huge lions be sent at them—the entire populace of the town of *Nomentum* shuddered at their roar. When they had been released, charging out with a great rush, they began to roll about at their feet, and like a father seeing his son after a long absence they met them with every joy and gentleness, and threw themselves at their feet. And when the lions had departed, he ordered that ferocious bears be sent out; they, too, as soon as they had been released, put aside all savagery and became like fawning lambs, and they also began to throw themselves at the feet of the saintly martyrs. And the blessed martyrs said: ‘O governor of wickedness, see how the wild beasts recognize their Creator, while you remain blind at heart and do not recognize the God Who deigned to create you in His image.’ Then the people gave out a great roar, and directed countless shouts towards the heavens; and more than 1,500 men with their households believed in the Lord. For a multitude of people numbering some 12,000, not counting children and women, had come from neighbouring towns to see the beast show.

7. The governor, seeing that he could not overcome them, and because many people were starting to believe in the Lord, ordered that they undergo capital punishment. And when they had been taken out of the amphitheatre,²³ and had been decapitated next to it, they cast out their bodies, unburied, to the dogs. But neither bird nor beast nor fly would touch their bodies. At night, however, the bodies were recovered by faithful Christians, and they took them to the arches of *Nomentum*,²⁴ near to the catacomb (*arenarium*); and there

²² The present *passio* is the unique source for the information that the amphitheatre was located next to the civic forum (*iuxta forum*), but no traces of it have ever been identified: see Pala, *Nomentum*, Forma Italiae, Regio I, 12 (Rome, 1976), p. 14, and Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 433–4.

²³ It is odd that the martyrs are taken *outside* the amphitheatre to be executed; executions were the principal form of entertainment provided in amphitheatres.

²⁴ The martyrs were buried ‘at the arches’ of *Nomentum* (*ad arcus Numentanos*), located at the fourteenth mile from Rome (c. 7). Fiocchi Nicolai has identified these ‘arches’ as the arcades built to reinforce a retaining wall on the east side of the Via Nomentana, some of which may still be seen: *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, p. 431: ‘siano da identificare con i muri di contenimento arcuati che fiancheggiano ancora la Nomentana all’altezza del XIV miglio antico’; cf. p. 435.

they raised great lamentation, and wrapping them with spices in a new cotton shroud, they buried them in the catacomb. And they persisted in hymns and prayers in the name of God for thirty days and nights. Many benefits abound there up to the present day. And if any sick person is taken there, he is freed from whatever illness he had contracted. No one doubts that it is Christ who performs (these miracles) up to the present day. And when after a number of years the pagan persecution came to an end, many Christians constructed in their name a basilica in honour of the blessed martyrs Primus and Felicianus, hoping to obtain mercy in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their basilica is at the fourteenth mile from the city of Rome.²⁵ Their feast-day is 9 June,²⁶ with our Lord reigning, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

²⁵ According to the author, the basilica was sited next to the catacomb (*iuxta arenarium*), by which is probably meant that it was built over the catacomb, and that entrance to the catacomb would have been by means of a staircase descending from inside the church, as in most suburban cemeteries of Rome. Unfortunately, no trace of either the basilica or catacomb has yet been found; see Focchi Nicolai, 'Cimiteri paleocristiani e insediamenti', pp. 112–13; and *idem*, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 437–9, with figs. 441 (a photograph of the empty field where the basilica is thought to have been) and 442 (a map showing the probable location of the basilica, marked as no. 1 on the map, in relation to the present-day Via Nomentana and the ancient forum).

²⁶ Their feast day is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 9 June: 'Rome, on the Via Nomentana, at the fifteenth mile *Ad arcus* ['at the arches'], Primus and Felicianus' (Appendix III, p. 653).

XXII

SS. Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc

c.550 × 600 (?); relevant to the cemetery *ad clivum Cucumeris* (Via Salaria Vecchia); the cemetery of Pontianus (Via Portuense); the basilica and cemetery of St Valentine (Via Flaminia); and a cemetery (not certainly identified) at the thirteenth mile of the Via Cornelia

The present *passio* concerns two wealthy Persians, Marius and his wife Martha, who came with their two sons, Audifax and Abacuc, to Rome in order to venerate the Christian saints and to worship at their shrines; they inevitably became closely involved in the Christian community there, above all in Trastevere, and in particular with Bishop Callistus (217–22), through whom they met various other Christians, such as the priest Valentine, and like them ended up being martyred; they were buried in a cemetery on the Via Cornelia.¹

The narrative is as follows. During the principate of Claudius, a Persian nobleman named Marius came to Rome with his wife, Martha, and their sons, Audifax and Abacuc, in order to pray at the shrines of the apostles and to seek out other Christians; they came upon the holy man Cyrinus in prison in Trastevere (c. 1). Claudius commanded that all Christians were to be executed without trial; and 260 Christians, who had been condemned *ad opus publicum*, were summarily executed (c. 2). Marius and Martha and their sons, together with the priest John, buried all these Christians in a cemetery on the Via Salaria Vecchia, next to Cucumber Hill; those they buried included a former tribune of Claudius, named Blastus (c. 3). When they returned to Trastevere, they found that Cyrinus had been executed and his body thrown into the Tiber; they retrieved the body at Tiber Island and buried it in the cemetery of Pontianus (c. 4). One night in Trastevere they heard Christians chanting psalms; they knocked at the door, and were admitted into the presence of Bishop Callistus, and they remained in hiding there for two months (c. 5).

¹ Listed *BHL* 5543 and *CPL* 2208; see discussion by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 219–20 and 231–2; Delehay, ‘Les martyrs d’Interamna’ [Valentine]; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, pp. 321–2 and 506–9; Saxer, ‘Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie’, pp. 48–9; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 250–7; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 13–17 [Valentine], 225–6 [Asterius], and 286–7 [Marius and Martha].

Meanwhile, Claudius arrested one Valentine the priest, and began to interrogate him (c. 6). The interrogation continued, and Valentine began to explain to Claudius the mysteries of the Christian faith, but the emperor was warned by the prefect Calpurnius about the dangers inherent in these false teachings (c. 7). Claudius handed Valentine over to Calpurnius, who handed him over to his agent Asterius, and he was taken into custody in the house of Asterius (c. 8). Asterius had an adopted daughter who had been blind for two years; Valentine said a prayer over her, placed his hand on her eyes, and her sight was miraculously restored (c. 9). Asterius and his wife asked to be baptized; Valentine performed the baptisms, and Bishop Callistus came to the house in order to confirm these baptisms (c. 10). Hearing of this miracle, Marius and Martha came with their sons to the house of Asterius, and remained there for a month; when he learned of this, Claudius ordered that the entire household of Asterius be taken in chains to Ostia, to be tried and tortured there (c. 11). They were duly tried and tortured in Ostia by a judge named Gelasius (c. 12). Gelasius sentenced them to death *ad bestias*, and they were taken to the bear-pit; but the bears fell meekly at the feet of Asterius (c. 13). Next, Gelasius ordered them to be burned alive, but the flames miraculously went out, so they were sentenced to capital punishment outside the walls of Ostia; a church was subsequently built on the site of their martyrdom (c. 14). Claudius had reserved the trial of Marius and Martha and their sons for himself, but meanwhile he ordered Valentine to undergo capital punishment; he was beheaded on the Via Flaminia, and buried there by a Roman matron named Savinilla (c. 15). Marius and Martha, Audifax and Abacuc were then brought before Claudius, who, after interrogation, established that they were wealthy Persians of royal descent; he then handed them over to the deputy, Muscianus (c. 16). Muscianus set up a tribunal at the temple of Tellus, and began the interrogation (c. 17). Muscianus first ordered the males to be stretched out on a rack, and for torches to be applied to their sides, and for them to be raked with iron hooks; then he cut off their hands and paraded them around the city with their severed hands tied around their necks, while Martha anointed her head with their blood (c. 18). In the end they were sentenced to capital punishment, taken to the thirteenth mile of the Via Cornelia, and executed: the three males in a sandpit, and Martha in a well; but a Roman matron named Felicitas buried them all on her own property (c. 19).

As is characteristic of these *passiones*, the implied chronology is historical nonsense. The author does not specify which emperor Claudius is in question: Claudius I (AD 41–54) or Claudius II Gothicus (268–70). Neither of these emperors was contemporary with Pope Callistus (217–22), who figures in c. 5. Some commentators assume that Claudius II Gothicus must be in question here;²

² E.g. Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 286 ('al tempo di Claudio il Gotico (268–270) vennero a Roma'), and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 254 ('Claude le Gothique', 'l'empereur Claude II'), etc.

but there is no evidence whatsoever that the second Claudius was a persecutor of Christians. It is perhaps best to assume that the author intentionally avoided specifying which Claudius he had in mind, and that he was sufficiently content that the name 'Claudius' sounded somehow suitably imperial. With the exception of Pope Callistus, who is attested in other sources, the remaining names appear to have been plucked, more or less at random, from martyrological records of various sorts.

St Cyrinus (cc. 1, 4).³ According to the *passio*, St Cyrinus was a venerable old man who was visited in prison by Marius and Martha, and then executed and cast into the Tiber. His body was recovered by Marius and Martha, and then buried in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense,⁴ on 25 March. A saint of this name is briefly commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 24 (not 25) March: 'Rome, the martyr Cyrinus' (Appendix III, p. 652). Otherwise nothing is known of him beside what is stated in the present work;⁵ he is not mentioned as lying in the cemetery of Pontianus in any of the seventh-century itineraries (Appendix IV, pp. 660–6). According to an inscription in the church of S. Silvestro in Capite, the remains of a martyr named 'Quirinus', whose feast day fell on 24 March—perhaps, therefore, identical with our Cyrinus—was translated into this church by Pope Paul I (757–67).⁶

Blastus and the 260 Martyrs of the Via Salaria Vecchia (cc. 2–3).⁷ The cemetery in which all these martyrs were buried is known by various names, as either *ad septem Palumbas* ('at the Seven Doves'), or *ad clivum Cucumeris* ('on Cucumber Hill'), or *ad caput S. Iohannis* ('at St John's Head').⁸ Although the author of the *passio* does not state the day on which Blastus was buried, the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* gives his feast day as 17 June: 'Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia *ad septem palumbas*, SS. Blastus and Diogenes' (Appendix III, p. 654). The tomb of Blastus is recorded as lying beneath the church of St John on the Via Salaria Vecchia in two of the seventh-century itineraries (Appendix IV (a) [§2] and (b) [§12], pp. 660, 664). The remains of Blastus were translated to the church of S. Marcello al Corso by the eleventh or twelfth

³ BSS III, col. 1339 [A. Amore].

⁴ On the cemetery of Pontianus, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86, with fig. 13; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 190–1; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9; M. Ricciardi, 'Pontiani coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 213–19, and *eadem*, 'Gli edifici di culto del sopraterra', pp. 661–5.

⁵ See Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 236.

⁶ For the inscription, see A. Silvagni, *Monumenta epigraphica cristiana saeculo XIII antiquiora*, I [Roma] (Vatican City, 1943), pl. XXXVII, no. 1.

⁷ BSS III, cols. 204–5 [D. Balboni].

⁸ On the cemetery, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 581–3; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 263; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 119–20; Carletti, 'Esplorazioni dimenticate', pp. 93–105 *idem*, 'Clivum Cucumeris (in) coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 114–18; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 32–8.

century, but otherwise nothing is known of him.⁹ It is not impossible that the author of the *passio* took the name either from an inscription in the cemetery *ad clivum Cucumeris* or from the entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.

St Valentine (cc. 6–10, 15).¹⁰ Of the martyrs described in the present *passio*, by far the best known is St Valentine. The *passio* states that Valentine, a priest, was executed on the Via Flaminia and buried there on 14 February.¹¹ We know from the ‘Liberian Catalogue’ that Pope Julius (337–52) built ‘the basilica called Valentine’s at the 2nd mile on the Via Flaminia’;¹² and this early date is confirmed by the fact that fragments of a Damasan epigram, in Filocalian lettering, were found during excavations of the site in 1888 (see below).¹³ In the earliest of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, it is stated that ‘St Valentine the martyr rests on the Via Flaminia, in a large basilica which Honorius restored’ (Appendix IV (a) [§1], p. 660), that is, Pope Honorius (625–38); and the *De locis sanctis martyrum* provides similar information: ‘near to the Via Flaminia appears the wonderfully decorated church of St Valentine the martyr’ (Appendix IV (b) [§13], p. 664). Fragments of the fourth-century basilica, and the cemetery over which it was built, as well as the seventh-century remodelling, have been clarified by archaeological excavation, first by Orazio Marucchi in the 1880s, then by Bruno Apollonj Ghetti in the 1940s, and most recently by Cinzia Palombi.¹⁴ From these excavations, it is clear that the original fourth-century church built by Pope Julius was a basilica with three naves and a single semicircular apse, of a kind which became standard all over the Christian world in the second half of the fourth century; this basilica incorporated a somewhat earlier *memoria*, which was conceivably the site of the martyr’s original burial.¹⁵ The essential point is that, by the late fourth century, there was a memorial shrine and a basilica dedicated to St Valentine at this site on the Via Flaminia, and that this

⁹ Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 35–6.

¹⁰ BSS XII, cols. 896–7 [A. Amore], and *ibid.* col. 899 [A. Amore].

¹¹ Note that a separate *passio* of St Valentine was confected from the chapters of the present *passio*, with some few additions, such as reference to the construction of the basilica on the Via Flaminia by Pope Julius (see below): listed BHL 8465; ed. *Acta SS., Februarii II* [1658], pp. 753–4.

¹² MGH, AA IX, p. 73; Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 101.

¹³ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 197–200 [no. 49], and Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 176–7.

¹⁴ O. Marucchi, *Il cimitero e la basilica di S. Valentino e guida archeologica della via Flaminia dal Campidoglio al Ponte Milvio* (Rome, 1890); *idem*, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 585–650; B. M. Apollonj Ghetti, ‘Nuove indagini sulla basilica di Valentino’, *RACr* 25 (1949), 171–89; C. Palombi, ‘S. Valentini, basilica, ecclesia, coemeterium’, *LTUR. Suburbium V*, pp. 217–25, with figs. 160–6; *eadem*, ‘Nuovi studi sulla basilica di san Valentino sulla via Flaminia’, *RACr* 85 (2009), 469–540; and *eadem*, ‘La basilica di S. Valentino sulla Via Flaminia: Nuove ricerche sull’assetto della zona presbiteriale’, in *Scavi e scoperte recenti*, ed. Brandenburg and Guidobaldi pp. 153–87.

¹⁵ See Krautheimer et al., *CBCR IV*, pp. 289–312, with pl. XVII. Palombi has revised the sequence proposed by Apollonj Ghetti and Krautheimer, and suggested instead that the fourth-century basilica of Julius had a single nave, which was replaced by a three-nave structure built by Pope Honorius (625–38), and subsequently dedicated by Pope Theodore (642–9).

basilica will have been known to the author of the present *passio*. More problematic, however, is the identity of this St Valentine. The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* contains the following entry, against 14 February: 'At Terni, at the sixty-fourth mile of the Via Flaminia, the death of St Valentine' (Appendix III, p. 651). An early bishop of Terni named Valentine is indeed known from other sources.¹⁶ The apparent coincidence—that there were two saints named Valentine venerated on the same day at different points of the Via Flaminia, one at the second mile, the other at Terni—has seemed improbable to many scholars, and various arguments have been proposed to explain the coincidence. Agostino Amore argued forcibly that the Roman Valentine is simply a mistaken doublet of the saint from Terni;¹⁷ but more recently scholars have begun to doubt Amore's explanation, given that there was undoubtedly a cult of St Valentine at the Roman extramural site from the fourth century onwards, and have suggested instead that St Valentine of Terni is a doublet of the Roman St Valentine.¹⁸ It is not impossible that the entire story of the martyrdom of St Valentine narrated in the present *passio* is a fabrication, based solely on the knowledge that a martyr named Valentine was venerated in a basilica on the Via Flaminia.

Asterius (cc. 8–14).¹⁹ According to the *passio*, Asterius was martyred at Ostia with his entire household and then buried outside the walls, on 8 January; a basilica was subsequently built at the site of his burial. There is no entry for Asterius at this date in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, but against 19 October there is the following entry: 'In Ostia, the death of Asterius' (Appendix III, p. 657).²⁰ According to the *passio* of Pope Callistus (no. XII), a priest named Asterius was responsible for recovering and burying the body of the pope, but he was himself arrested and thrown into the Tiber; his body was recovered downstream and buried at Ostia (XII.9). More significantly, by the late fourth century a basilica in the name of Asterius is attested in a reliable historical source: there is a letter in the *Collectio Avellana*, datable to 383–4, in which it is reported that a man named Macarius was beaten to death at Ostia by supporters of Pope Damasus, and subsequently buried 'in the basilica of the martyr Asterius' (*sepelit in basilica martyris Asterii*).²¹ Unfortunately, no trace

¹⁶ See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, pp. 405–13.

¹⁷ A. Amore, 'S. Valentino', and *idem*, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 13–17.

¹⁸ See Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Il culto di S. Valentino', pp. 174–6, and Verrando, 'Reciproche influenze', pp. 104–10. This more plausible suggestion is endorsed by Cécile Lanéry ('Hagiographie', p. 255).

¹⁹ BSS II, cols. 516–18 [M. V. Brandi].

²⁰ See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 98–9, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 225–6. On the martyrs of Ostia, see also Meiggs, 'The Christian Martyrs of Ostia and Portus', Appendix VII in his *Roman Ostia*, pp. 518–31, with discussion of Asterius at pp. 523–5.

²¹ *Ep.* ii. 82 (CSEL XXXV, p. 29); cf. discussion by Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, p. 524.

of this basilica has ever been found.²² In the ninth century, Pope Sergius II (844–7) translated the bodies of Asterius and ‘his holy daughter’ from Ostia to the church of S. Martino ai Monti.²³

Marius and Martha, Audifax and Abacuc (cc. 1–5, 16–19).²⁴ The *passio* relates that Marius and Martha were wealthy Persians, the offspring of Persian kings. In this respect they resemble—and were arguably modelled on—the martyrs Abdon and Sennes, who, in the *passio* of St Polychronius and others (XVI.4, 7–10), were wealthy Persians who occupied themselves with recovering and burying the bodies of Christian martyrs. After their own martyrdom, Abdon and Sennes were buried by a certain Roman subdeacon named Cyrinus (XVI.10): whereas in the present *passio*, it is Marius and Martha who attend to the burial at Rome of the Christian Cyrinus (c. 4). According to the *passio*, Marius and his two sons were executed in a sandpit at the thirteenth mile of the Via Cornelia, and Martha was drowned in a nearby well called the *Nymphae Catabassi*; all the bodies were subsequently buried together on 20 January on a nearby estate belonging to the pious matron Felicitas. The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry against 20 January: ‘At the twelfth mile of the Via Cornelia, in their own cemetery, Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc’ (Appendix III, p. 651). Of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, *De locis sanctis martyrum* notes their burial on the Via Cornelia, but gives no further specification (Appendix IV (b) [§1], p. 662). There is an eighteenth-century church dedicated to these martyrs at approximately this location on the Via Cornelia, in the present-day hamlet of Boccea, and it was formerly thought that the modern church marked the site of their burial;²⁵ but more recent archaeological exploration of the vicinity has brought to light the remnants of a marble altar provided with a *fenestella confessionis*, to allow worshippers to touch contact relics, and these remnants are thought to belong to the original sanctuary of SS. Marius and Martha.²⁶

²² See P.-A. Février, ‘Ostie et Porto à la fin de l’antiquité. Topographie religieuse et vie sociale’, pp. 296–7; Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, p. 391; and F. A. Bauer, ‘Stadt- und Heiligenlegenden. Die Christianisierung Ostias in der spätantiken Gedankenwelt’, in *Die spätantike Stadt und ihre Christianisierung*, ed. G. Brands and H.-G. Severin (Wiesbaden, 2003), pp. 43–61, at 56–8.

²³ *LP*, ed. Duchesne, II, p. 94; Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, p. 89.

²⁴ *BSS* VIII, cols. 1186–7 [G. D. Gordini].

²⁵ See, e.g., L. Silli, *Le memorie cristiane della campagna romana*, I. *La via Cornelia* (Rome, 1910), pp. 88–91, and Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Etruria meridionale*, pp. 64–72, at 66.

²⁶ V. Fiocchi Nicolai, ‘Un altare paleocristiano del santuario dei martiri Mario, Marta, Audifax e Abacuc sulla via Cornelia’, *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia*, 3rd ser.: *Rendiconti* 57 (1984–5), 89–110; *idem*, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio*, I. *Etruria meridionale*, pp. 64–72, with figs. 27–31 (the marble altar); and *idem*, ‘I santuari martiriali’, in *Santuari d’Italia: Lazio*, ed. Boesch Gajano et al., pp. 58–75, at 69, with fig. 21.

Text. The *passio* of Marius and Martha enjoyed relatively wide circulation during the Middle Ages: *BHLms* lists 117 witnesses, and Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further thirty: a total of some 150.²⁷ The text translated here is that of Jean Bolland, printed in the *Acta SS., Ianuarii* II [1643], pp. 216–19; the chapter numbering is Bolland's.

1. During the principate of Claudius²⁸ a man named Marius came from the regions of Persia, together with his wife Martha and their sons, Audifax and Abacuc, Christians all of them, in order to pray at the shrines of the apostles. When they arrived in Rome, they began to seek out the bodies of the saints in prisons and burial grounds. And while they were looking intently and enthusiastically, they came to the 'Barracks' in Trastevere,²⁹ and they found in prison there a venerable man named Cyrinus, who had already suffered many blows for the name of Christ, and had been stripped of all his wealth. When Marius and Martha his wife, together with their two sons Audifax and Abacuc, came to him, they threw themselves at his feet, begging that he pray for them; and they remained there eight days. And they began to care for Cyrinus from their own resources, and to wash his feet and the feet of those who were bound up in chains, and to pour the same water on their heads and those of their children.

2. At this same time Claudius commanded that if any Christians were found, either at large or in custody, they were to be tortured without trial. When the command had been made public, he arrested two hundred and sixty Christians on the Via Salaria (Nuova), who had been condemned through the name of Christ to dig sand;³⁰ he had them detained in the brickworks

²⁷ Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 253 with n. 538.

²⁸ It is not clear from the text which emperor Claudius the author of the *passio* has in mind. During the principate of the first Claudius (41–54), there were as yet no shrines of Christian martyrs in Rome (Peter and Paul were not martyred until the reign of Nero, Claudius' successor). The other emperor of that name, Claudius II 'Gothicus' (268–70), is equally inappropriate to the narrative, for there was no known persecution under Claudius II, and he is described by the author of *SHA* as a paragon of virtue in the mould of Trajan and Antoninus Pius, who loved his kinsmen and enacted most excellent laws (cc. 2–3, 6–7); a similar portrait is given in Aurelius Victor, *De caesaribus*, c. 34 (trans. Bird, pp. 36–7).

²⁹ The *Castra* here are the *Castra Ravennatium* (also called *Urbs Ravennatium*), the barracks in Trastevere which was the residence of the Ravenna fleet whenever it was stationed in Rome, detailed for such duties as the erection of awnings in theatres and amphitheatres, as well as for duty in the nearby Naumachia Augusti; they also probably served as harbour police. The *Castra* were located just west of the present church of S. Crisogono, though nothing remains of them except a building with two courtyards, apparently a barracks, near the Piazza S. Cosimato: see Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, p. 337, as well as Richardson, p. 79, and C. Lega, 'Castra Ravennatium', *LTUR* I, pp. 254–5.

³⁰ These Christians have formally been condemned to enforced labour on public works. For the phrase *harenam fodio*, 'to dig sand', specified as penal servitude in legal texts, see *TLL* VI/3, col. 2528; the phrase recurs in the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.1). The softest kind of tufa was dug out and used to make cement; the Christians have been sentenced to hard labour *ad opus publicum*, digging sand from a sandpit to be made into cement.

(*figlinae*)³¹ just outside the walls at the Porta Salaria, and ordered them to be killed by arrows in the city's amphitheatre.³²

3. When they had been executed, Marius and Martha his wife, as well as their sons Audifax and Abacuc, came, in the company of the blessed priest John,³³ to the place where the bodies of the saints had been executed, and they found that a fire had been lit over the holy bodies; and they began to extract the bodies from the flames, and to bury them in linen shrouds out of their own resources, for they were exceedingly rich and well-to-do. And they buried as many as they could in a crypt on the Via Salaria Vecchia, next to 'Cucumber Hill' (*ad cliuum Cucumeris*).³⁴ Then they buried with them a certain tribune of Claudius named Blastus;³⁵ and they kept vigils and fasts, with much prayer, in that same place for many days, in the company of John.

4. When Claudius heard this, he began eagerly to seek out Marius and his wife Martha, and he did not find them, since they had done the burial secretly. Coming back to Rome, they came to the 'Barracks' (*ad Castrum*) looking for the blessed Cyrinus. When they did not find him they were greatly saddened. They found at last a certain priest named Pastor,³⁶ who told them everything that had happened, and how Cyrinus had been killed by sword at night, and had been cast into the Tiber; his corpse remained on Tiber Island (*Insula Lycaonia*).³⁷ Coming at night with their family and the blessed Pastor, they

³¹ The word *figlinae* is used to refer to potteries or brickworks (see *TLL* VI/1, cols. 707–8). The present reference is to a place located between the Via Salaria Nuova and the Via Nomentana: see L. Camilli, 'Sal() figlinae / salare () prae(dia) / salarese opus', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, p. 34, and E. M. Steinby, 'La cronologia delle "figlinae" doliari urbane della fine dell'età repubblicana fino all'inizio del III secolo', *Bullettino della Commissione archeologica del Comune di Roma* 84 (1974–5), 7–132, at 83–7; and cf. Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, p. 219. What are apparently the same brickworks are mentioned in the *passio* of St Susanna (XI.29).

³² Although there was more than one amphitheatre in Rome (see *LTUR* I, pp. 30–7), the unqualified reference to an amphitheatre in Rome would most naturally point to the Flavian Amphitheatre or Colosseum; but the Amphitheatrum Castrense (at the site of the Sessorian) or the Amphitheatrum Neronis (on the Campus Martius) could also be in question. The author's topography is uncharacteristically vague at this point.

³³ It is not possible to identify this priest named John; but note that the cemetery *ad cliuum Cucumeris* was also known as the *coemeterium ad caput S. Iohannis* (see above), arguably named for an unknown saint who had been martyred under Julian the Apostate (361–3), and whose head was venerated as a relic in a church built on the site of the cemetery. A dutiful Christian named John who attends to the burial of martyrs figures in other *passiones*: those of Polychronius and companions (XVI.35), John and Paul (XVIII.4), Pope Marcellus (XX.4), and Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix (XXXVI.1).

³⁴ On this cemetery, see n. 8.

³⁵ No tribune named Blastus is listed in *PIR*² or *PLRE* I; the name possibly derives from that of the royal chamberlain in Acts 12: 20. For an entry concerning a martyr named Blastus in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, see p. 422.

³⁶ The priest Pastor appears to have been borrowed from the *passio* of SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis, where he fulfils a similar role of recovering and burying the body of St Praxedis (XV.1, 7–8).

³⁷ *Insula Lycaonia* is the medieval name for the *insula Tiberina*, the island in the river Tiber adjacent to Trastevere: see Platner–Ashby, p. 282; Richardson, pp. 209–10; G. De Spirito, 'Insula

recovered his body and buried it in a crypt in the cemetery of Pontianus, on 25 March.³⁸

5. After these events, Marius and Martha and their sons heard one night in the Trastevere a multitude of Christians chanting psalms in a certain house. Approaching the place in gladness, they knocked at the door of the house. Those inside were afraid and did not wish to open the door to them. In that place was a bishop named Callistus.³⁹ When he heard them knocking, he said to the Christian congregation, 'Take comfort, do not fear. Christ knocked on our door;⁴⁰ let us open our door, and, comforting ourselves let us praise the Lord, because He is calling us.' And immediately he went to the doorway and opened the door. When Marius and Martha his wife, together with their sons, the young men Audifax and Abacuc, saw him, they threw themselves at the feet of the blessed Bishop Callistus. When all the Christian congregation saw them, they rejoiced, and they gave each other the kiss of peace. Callistus delivered a prayer at this same hour, saying: 'O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You Who assemble things that have been dispersed, and preserve those which have been assembled, increase the faith and belief in Your servants through Christ our Lord, who lives with God the Father omnipotent and the Holy Spirit forever.'⁴¹ And the entire congregation replied, 'Amen'. And they remained in hiding in that place for two months.

6. Then Claudius arrested a certain holy man named Valentine, a priest, and shut him in prison, bound with shackles and chains. After two days he ordered him to be brought before him in his palace near the amphitheatre.⁴² When he was brought into his presence, he said to him: 'Why do you not make use of my friendship, and live with the commonwealth of our state? I hear marvellous things about your wisdom; yet although you are wise, you

Lycaonia', *LTUR* III, pp. 97–8, and D. Degrassi, 'Insula Tiberina', *LTUR* III, pp. 99–101, with figs. 62–5. See also no. XII (p. 295, n. 31).

³⁸ On the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense, see n. 4 (it is the famous cemetery which also housed the remains of SS. Abdon and Sennes); for the commemoration of St Cyrinus in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, see p. 422.

³⁹ The Roman bishop in question is presumably meant to be Pope Callistus I, whose dates (217–22) sit ill with the chronology implied by reference to an emperor Claudius elsewhere in the *passio*. However, it is interesting to note that, according to the *Liber pontificalis*, Pope Callistus was from the region of the *Urbs Ravennatum* (*LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 21; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 141; trans. Davis, p. 7: 'born in Rome, son of Domitius, from the region Urbs Ravennatum'); this is presumably the explanation of why the author of the *passio* here situates him in Trastevere.

⁴⁰ Rev. 3: 20 ('ecce sto ad ostium et pulso; si quis audierit vocem meam et aperuerit ianuam, introibo ad illum et cenabo cum illo et ipse mecum').

⁴¹ It is interesting to note that this prayer was subsequently adapted as an antiphon for the feast of St Valentine: see R.-J. Hesbert, *Corpus antiphonalium officii*, 6 vols. (Rome, 1963–79), III, no. 4802.

⁴² The precise location of a 'palatium Claudii' in the vicinity of the (Flavian) amphitheatre is unknown; see G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Claudii', *LTUR* IV, pp. 41–2. The same 'palace of Claudius' is referred to in the *passio* of Pope Stephen (XXVI.6).

cause offence by your vain superstition.' Valentine the priest said in reply: 'If you knew God's gift, you too would rejoice, and your state with you, if you were to reject demons and handmade idols, and to confess one God, the Father omnipotent, and Jesus Christ, His Son, the Creator of all things, "Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things which are in them".'⁴³ A certain legal adviser (*legisconsultor*),⁴⁴ who was standing near Claudius, replied, saying in a clear voice to Valentine, the priest: 'What is your opinion concerning the god Jupiter, or Mercury?' Valentine the priest said in reply: 'I say nothing concerning them except that I know them to be wretched and foul men, who lived their lifetimes in filth and carnal delights and scorn of their bodies. And if you were to show to me their ancestry, you would see how foul they were.' The legal adviser replied out loud: 'He has blasphemed the gods and the rulers of our state.'

7. On the same day Claudius was listening more patiently,⁴⁵ and said in reply to Valentine: 'If Christ is God, why do you not reveal to me what is the truth?' Valentine the priest replied: 'Let your majesty hear it. Listen to me, O king,⁴⁶ and your soul will be saved, and your state will be increased, and your enemies will be eliminated, and in all undertakings you will be the victor; you will enjoy dominion in this life and in the future world. I admonish you in respect of one thing, that you repent for the blood of saints which you have spilled, and believe in Christ, and thus be baptized: and you will be saved.' Then Claudius said to those standing near him: 'Listen, Roman citizens and assembly of the republic, to what a sane doctrine is being revealed by this man.' In reply, Calpurnius the prefect⁴⁷ said aloud: 'You have been deceived,

⁴³ Acts 4: 24. The credal statement resembles historical creeds in certain respects, for example, that attributed to Nicetas of Remesiana (late fourth century): 'Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem [caeli et terrae creatorem] et in filium eius Iesum Christum', etc. (Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, no. 19); or that of the sixth-century, preserved in the Missale Gallicanum Vetus: 'Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem, creatorem caeli et terrae', etc. (*ibid.* no. 27). The words *creatorem caeli et terrae*, which are given in the *passio*, do not occur in the very earliest creeds, but have been imported from Acts 14: 14.

⁴⁴ The official term for the legal adviser who assisted at trials (*cognitiones*) before the emperor was *assessor* (see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 500–3, and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, p. 178). The term *legisconsultor*, printed as one word by Bolland, is not attested in *TLL*, which suggests that it should rather be printed as two words, *legis consultor*; cf. *TLL* IV, col. 596, s.v. 'consultor'.

⁴⁵ We know from Suetonius that the first emperor Claudius took part enthusiastically in judicial *cognitiones*: see Suetonius, *Claudius*, c. 12. 2 ('cognitionibus magistratuum ut unus e consiliariis frequenter interfuit'), 15. 1 ('in cognoscendo autem ac decernendo mira varietate animi fuit, modo circumspectus et sagax, interdum inconsultus et praeceps, nonnumquam frivolus amentique similis'). Perhaps these words of Suetonius suggested to the author of the *passio* the volatile nature of 'Claudius' as judge in the *cognitio* of Valentine.

⁴⁶ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32). Only after c.400 (and especially after 476) did the practice become widespread.

⁴⁷ The name Calpurnius was extremely common (over eighty persons of this name are listed in *PIR*²). The author does not specify which prefecture this Calpurnius held. Tacitus (*Ann.* vi. 11) and Suetonius (*Tiberius*, c. 42.1) describe the activities of L. Calpurnius Piso, who was *praefectus urbi* from AD 13 until 32 (see *PIR*², no. 289, and Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, p. 113).

Your Highness, by false teachings: but if it is right that we abandon what we have worshipped and adored from our infancy, you decide.'

8. At that same time Claudius changed his mind and in sadness handed him over to Calpurnius the prefect, saying: 'Listen patiently to him, and if what he says is not sane counsel, do to him what the laws stipulate for sacrilege; if not, let his just petition be heard.' Then taking Valentine the priest, Calpurnius the prefect handed him over to a certain Asterius, his chief officer (*princeps*), saying: 'If you can reduce him by gentle persuasion, I will report your accomplishment to Claudius, and you will be his friend, and he will enrich you with riches and possessions.' Taking him, Asterius led him to his own home. When he entered the house of Asterius, Valentine the priest fell to his knees and prayed, saying, 'O God, Maker of all things visible and invisible, and Creator of the human race, Who sent Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ that You might free us from this world and lead us from the shadows to the true light, Who commanded us by saying, "Come unto me all who labour and are heavily laden, and I will refresh you";⁴⁸ convert this house, and grant light to it after the shadows, that it may recognize You as God and Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.'

9. Hearing this, Asterius the agent said to Valentine the priest: 'I admire your good sense, in that you say that your Christ is light.' In reply Valentine said in a clear voice, 'And truly, because Jesus Christ the Lord, Who was born of the Holy Spirit and Mary the virgin, is the true light, Who illuminates every man who comes into this world.' Asterius replied, saying: 'If He illuminates every man, I shall now establish if He is God; if not, I shall extinguish your folly. I have an adoptive daughter, whom I have loved since infancy, and suddenly two years ago she was blinded and disfigured by cataracts. I shall bring her to you; and when she is cured, I will do everything you ask of me.' Valentine the priest therefore replied: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, bring her to me.' Running off in some anxiety, Asterius brought the blind girl to Valentine the priest. Raising his hands to the heavens, Valentine, his eyes flowing with tears, said: 'O Lord God Almighty, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies, Who sent Your Son Our Lord Jesus Christ to earth, so that You could lead us from the shadows to the true light, I call upon You as an unworthy sinner. But because You save all souls, and wish no one to perish, I therefore beseech Your mercy, so that all people may recognize that You are God, and the Father of all things and their Creator, Who opened the eyes in a man born blind, and even raised up Lazarus from the tomb when his corpse was already rotting.⁴⁹ I invoke You, Who are the true light, and the Lord of

The author of the *passio* could conceivably have taken the name 'Calpurnius' from one of these sources (cf. n. 45, for another possible debt to Suetonius).

⁴⁸ Matt. 11: 28.

⁴⁹ John 9: 1–11 (the man born blind); John 11: 11–39 (Lazarus dead and rotting).

Principalities and Powers;⁵⁰ let not “my will but Yours be done”⁵¹ over this girl Your servant, that You may deign to illumine her with the light of Your intelligence.’ And he placed his hand on her eyes, saying: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, illuminate Your servant, because You are the true light.’ And when he had said this, her eyes were opened.

10. When Asterius saw this, he and his wife fell at the feet of the blessed Valentine, and spoke as follows, saying: ‘Let us pray through Christ, through Whom we recognize the light, that you do what you know how to do, so that our souls may be saved.’ Valentine replied and said, ‘Do, therefore, what I say, and if you believe with all your heart, destroy all idols, and fast, and drop the charges against all (prisoners); let someone be baptized in making confession, and he shall be saved.’ Then he enjoined upon them a three-day fast. And because Asterius had many of the Christians in custody, he released them all. And when the three days of the fast were finished, and it was Sunday, Valentine baptized Asterius, together with all his household. And he summoned Callistus, the bishop, to him; when he arrived, he made the sign of the Cross on Asterius and his entire household⁵²—nearly forty-six persons of both sexes.

11. When Marius and his wife Martha, together with their sons, Audifax and Abacuc, heard of this event, that a blind girl had been illuminated by St Valentine and that as a result of the healing the entire household of Asterius had become believers, they came with great joy to the house of Asterius, giving thanks to God, and they remained there thirty-two days. At the end of this time Claudius summoned Asterius, the chief officer (*princeps*).⁵³ And it was reported to him that a girl had been healed of blindness in his house, and as a result of this miracle he had been baptized by Valentine in the name of Christ, together with his entire household. Enraged, Claudius sent soldiers, and arrested all those whom he found in the house of Asterius. When they were brought before him in chains, among them being Marius and Martha, Audifax and Abacuc, all aristocrats from Persia who had come to pray at the shrines of the apostles, he ordered them to be separated from the assembly of other Christians, commanding that Asterius, with all his household be led in chains to Ostia, there to undergo trial with interrogation by means of torture.

12. And when they arrived at this place [Ostia], they handed them over to a certain judge (*iudex*), named Gelasius.⁵⁴ Taking charge of them, Gelasius

⁵⁰ ‘Principalities’ (*Principatus*) and ‘Powers’ (*Potestates*): Col. 1: 16 and 2: 10.

⁵¹ Luke 22: 42.

⁵² The point is that a bishop was required to ‘confirm’ baptisms carried out by deacons and priests; see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2515–44 [P. de Puniet], s.v. ‘confirmation’. There is another example of episcopal confirmation in the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.5).

⁵³ The title *princeps* was that borne by the highest-ranking official in a government office; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 564–6 and 587, and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, pp. 41 and 96.

⁵⁴ Meiggs (*Roman Ostia*, p. 524), commenting on this passage of the *passio*, noted: ‘Gelasius is stationed at Ostia and might be the *praefectus annonae*: that he is not otherwise known is not

ordered that they all be put in prison. And after twenty-eight days, Gelasius ordered them to be brought into his presence. When they were brought before him, he said to them: 'Have you heard what the victorious (rulers) of our state have commanded?' They said: 'We do not know.' He said to them: 'Everyone who shall sacrifice to the gods may live, and liberty will be granted to him, and he will be enriched with wealth. But whoever does not wish to abase himself before the gods, let him be executed by various tortures.' The blessed Asterius said: 'Let those who are similar to them, sacrifice to them, and perish with them. You should know this: that we offer ourselves as sacrifice to God Almighty and to the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son.' Then Gelasius the judge, enraged, ordered Asterius to be raised up on to the rack and to be tortured; and all the others he ordered to be beaten with staves. But they were saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Who extinguished the searing flames of fire for the Three Youths in the furnace, extinguish the threats of this tyrant, so that he cannot exult over Your servants, and do not separate us from our master Asterius.'

13. Immediately he ordered Asterius to be taken down from the rack, and to be placed in custody once again, saying: 'For these people more serious punishments should be prepared.' And he commanded that all the populace should assemble at dawn for a spectacle. Then he commanded that a show be set up in the amphitheatre,⁵⁵ and the blessed Asterius and all the other saints should be brought before him there. He said to Asterius: 'Abandon the madness of your vanity, and promise that you will sacrifice to the gods, so that you do not die in torture, and all these people die at the same time.' The blessed Asterius said in reply: 'We all desire this: just as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for sinners, so too let us undeserving sinners undergo tortures for His name, so that, purged of the filth of this world, we may be found worthy to attain safe and sound the longed-for kingdom of heaven.' On hearing this, Gelasius the judge, moved by anger, ordered them to be thrown to the beasts. And straightway his agents seized them, and took them to the place which is called the 'Bear-pit' (*Ursarius*) next to the 'Golden Temple' (*fanum aureum*), because the beasts were fed there.⁵⁶ And when all the saints entered the pit, the

damaging, for there are many gaps in the list of known holders of the office.' Verrando suggested, rather improbably, that the name derives from that of the pope: 'Il nome di Gelasio, dato al giudice, dev'essere un ricordo assai lontano del regno del pontefice omonimo' (*La Passio Callisti*, p. 1067, n. 139).

⁵⁵ No evidence has yet been found for an amphitheatre in Ostia: see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, pp. 425–7, esp. 426 ('No amphitheatre, however, has been found, and none is recorded in any surviving inscription'), and *idem*, 'Ostia', in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, ed. R. Stillwell (Princeton, 1976), pp. 658–61, at 659, speaking of the small theatre which has been excavated at Ostia: 'It is probable that gladiators and wild beasts attracted much larger audiences but no amphitheatre has yet been found. There may have been one S. of the river.'

⁵⁶ Numerous pagan temples in Roman Ostia have been identified by excavation; see K. Rieger, 'Les sanctuaires publics à Ostie de la République jusqu'au Haut Empire', in *Ostia, port et porte de la Rome antique*, ed. J.-P. Descoedres (Geneva, 2001), pp. 247–61. These temples include that of

beasts were suddenly released, so as to kill them. Then the blessed Asterius, having made the sign of the Cross of Christ, said in a clear voice: 'O Lord God Almighty, Who had mercy on Your servant Daniel in the lion-pit, and comforted him through the prophet Habacuc, may You likewise visit Your servants here through Your holy angel.' And, rushing up, the beasts began to worship at the feet of Asterius, and at those of all the saints.

14. And when Gelasius saw this, he said to the populace: 'Do you see how they have made the beasts tame by means of magic?' Many people said, 'Because their God released them.' Then he ordered the saints to be thrown out of the bear-pit and to be burned alive. Then St Asterius shouted out to the saints: 'Take comfort and do not fear, because He is present as the fourth, Who was present among the Three Hebrew Youths in the blazing furnace.' And immediately the flames went out, so that none of their limbs were touched by the flames. Then Gelasius, seeing that he had been defeated in every way, ordered them to be thrown outside the walls of Ostia, and there to undergo capital punishment, and others of them to be stoned to death. Then Christians buried their bodies with great care on 18 January.⁵⁷ In that place a church was built, and the assistance of the martyrs flourishes there up to the present day.

15. The emperor [Claudius] ordered that Marius and Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc should be kept for him, so that he could hear them in private audience; but he ordered that Valentine the priest should be beaten with staves and then undergo the sentence of capital punishment. He was beheaded on the Via Flaminia on 14 February. A certain matron, named Savinilla, recovered his body and buried it in the same place where he was beheaded; the Lord performs many miracles there, to the praise and glory of His name.⁵⁸

16. And so Claudius ordered Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc to be brought to him in person. And when they were presented to him, Claudius, thinking that they were wealthy in financial terms, addressed them, saying: 'Where do you come from?' Audifax, their eldest son, replied, saying: 'From Persia'. Claudius said: 'What is the family relationship between you all?' Audifax replied: 'I and Abacuc, in terms of the flesh, are their sons.' Claudius said: 'For what reason did you happen into a superior country?' Audifax replied: 'We desired with longing to come to pray at the feet of the apostles.' Claudius said: 'And what resources did you have, that you could spend so much on a trip? or rather, explain what is your lineage.' Marius and Martha replied and said: 'God Almighty knows that we were born to the nobility in

Hercules Victor (Rieger, pp. 247–9), Vulcan (pp. 250–1), the so-called 'Round Temple' in the forum (p. 254), the two temples of the Bona Dea, and the four small temples (*tempietti*) next to the theatre (pp. 251–2). Whether any of these is identical with the *fanum aureum* mentioned in the text, cannot be determined; by the same token, none of them lies adjacent to any structure which might be identified as a 'bear-pit' (which in any case would probably have been constructed largely of wood).

⁵⁷ See p. 424.

⁵⁸ On the basilica of St Valentine, see n. 14.

every generation. But that you might know us to be aristocrats, I am the son of the emperor Maromenus, and she is the daughter of Cusinis the subking.⁵⁹ Claudius said: 'And why did you not follow the opinion of your parents, such that you desert the gods whom your parents worshipped, and now seek out dead men?' Marius replied: 'We are servants of Christ, who have come to pray to His servants and apostles, so that they may deign to intercede with Him on our behalf.' Claudius said: 'Is your wealth accessible?' Marius said: 'We gave our money to Him Who had given it to us for a short period, namely, to the Lord Jesus Christ.' After hearing this speech, Claudius, greatly angered, handed them over to Muscianus⁶⁰ the deputy (*uicarius*),⁶¹ saying: 'If they do not sacrifice and abandon this superstition, apply various tortures to them.'

17. On the same day he ordered that a tribunal⁶² be prepared for him at the temple of Tellus (*in Tellude*),⁶³ and all manner of instruments of torture be brought there. And when the prisoners had been brought into his presence, he said in a rage, 'Has it been indicated to you what the leaders and governors of the state have commanded?' Audifax replied, saying: 'We do not know'. Muscianus, the deputy (*uicarius*) said: 'Do you therefore wish to hear their decree?' Marius and Martha replied: 'We wish to hear what you have been ordered to do'. Muscianus the deputy said: 'Let tortures be applied'. And when the instruments of torture had been brought, he said: 'Every kind of torture will be applied to you, if you do not obey the decree of the emperors. But if you should listen to the command of the emperors, both your native nobility will be renewed and you will gleam with exalted distinction. This the victors of our state commanded: that you sacrifice to the gods without delay, and that you be on friendly terms with the emperors.' Audifax, the elder son, replied: 'You have said a foolish thing.' Muscianus said to Marius, Martha, and Abacuc: 'What do you say to this?' They replied: 'We all speak with one voice.'

18. Muscianus the deputy (*uicarius*) therefore ordered them to be stripped and beaten with staves, but that Martha should stand in front of them. As they

⁵⁹ These names were evidently invented by the author of the *passio*: no king of Persia named Maromenus, and no subking named Cusinis, are attested in historical sources; see *The Cambridge History of Iran*, III. *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. E. Yarshater, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1983), II, *ad indicem*. The word *mar* in Iranian means 'lord', which may be represented in the first syllable of *Maromenus*; but in any event Persia was ruled by a king, not by an *imperator* (as here).

⁶⁰ The name Muscianus is not found in prosopographical sources; but perhaps Muscianus is simply a misspelling of Mucianus, a well-attested name (see *PIR*², no. 692).

⁶¹ The 'deputy' (*uicarius*) here is presumably the deputy of the urban prefect, rather than of the praetorian prefect, as is indicated by the fact that he holds his tribunal at the offices of the urban prefecture, near the temple of Tellus: see Sinnigen, 'The Vicarius Urbis Romae' and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 62–5.

⁶² The text here reads *iussit sibi in Tellude gremium praeparari*, where *gremium* is obvious nonsense; I understand *iudicium* ('tribunal') for *gremium*.

⁶³ The site of the tribunals and the *scrinia* of the urban prefect was the *Secretarium Tellurensense*, near to the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), on which see no. VII (p. 198, n. 18).

were being beaten, and the torturers were saying by way of public announcement, 'Do not scorn the commands of the emperors', Martha was saying joyously: 'Be resolute, my sons'. Marius was praising the Lord, saying: 'Glory be to You, Lord Jesus Christ'.⁶⁴ Muscianus the deputy ordered them to be raised up from the ground and suspended from the rack. While they were being stretched with hemp ropes, Audifax, the elder son, cried out in a clear voice: 'Glory be to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to count us among Your servants.' In a rage, Muscianus ordered fire to be applied to their sides, and their bodies to be raked with iron hooks. But they were happily shouting out with cheery faces, 'We give thanks to Thee, O Lord.' Muscianus ordered them to be taken down from the rack in sight of Martha, and their hands to be cut off. And when their hands had been cut off, blood began to flow. Martha, gathering up the blood of her husband and their sons, anointed her head with joy. Then Muscianus ordered that they be paraded around the city with their (severed) hands tied around their necks, while a herald proclaimed: 'Do not blaspheme the gods!' Marius, Audifax, and Abacuc were shouting out: 'They are not gods, but demons, who will destroy you and your emperors!'

19. On the same day he pronounced sentence, that they should be beheaded. Taken to the thirteenth mile on the Via Cornelia, to the 'Waters of Descent' (*Nymphae Catabassi*),⁶⁵ Marius, Audifax, and Abacuc were beheaded in the sandpit, but Martha was killed in the *Nymphae*. Muscianus ordered that their bodies be burned once again, so that they could not undergo burial. But a certain matron, named Felicitas, took their partly-burned bodies and buried them on her own property. She raised Martha up from the well, and reunited her with the saintly bodies, on 20 January: whence they bestow the bounties of our Lord Jesus Christ up to the present day, with our Lord Jesus Christ reigning, Who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

⁶⁴ The wording of the exclamation—*Gloria tibi Domine*—inevitably recalls that of the acclamation of the Gallican mass: J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, trans. F. A. Brunner, 2 vols. (Westminster, MD, 1992), I, p. 77: 'Then the parade to the Gospel-singing became Christ's triumphal march: to Christ resounds the *Gloria tibi Domine*, of which until then the Roman Mass knew nothing'; also pp. 237, speaking of Carolingian liturgical reform ('Amalar advises those who do not understand the Latin Gospel lesson, at least to pronounce the *Gloria tibi Domine* with the rest'), and 447, concerning features acquired over the centuries by the Roman mass: at the gospel pericope, 'The deacon greets the people and receives their greeting in return. Then he announces the pericope and the cry is heard: *Gloria tibi Domine*.'

⁶⁵ On the meaning of the name *Nymphae Catabassi*, see L. Silli, *Le memorie cristiane della campagna romana*, I. *La via Cornelia* (Rome, 1910), pp. 74–5, and Tomassetti and Tomassetti, *La campagna romana*, II, p. 597, who interpret it to mean 'the fountains next to (the property of) Bassus'; cf. discussion by Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Etruria meridionale*, p. 66, who notes that in the hamlet of Boccea, where the marble altar was excavated (see n. 26), there is a fountain called by the locals 'fonte di S. Mario'; of this fountain Fiocchi Nicolai comments, 'difícilmente può non essere messa in relazione con il toponimo *ad nymphas catabassi*.'

XXIII

SS. Marcellinus and Peter

c.560 × 600; relevant to the cemetery *inter duas lauros* (Via Labicana), and the diocese of *Silva Candida* (Via Cornelia)

The present *passio* relates the martyrdom of two of the most widely culted of Roman saints, Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist,¹ who are commemorated in the Canon of the Roman mass (Appendix V (a), p. 667), and who were buried in a cemetery named after them on the Via Labicana, the *coemeterium inter duas lauros ad SS. Marcellinum et Petrum*.²

The narrative is as follows. While Peter, a Christian exorcist, was being held in prison, Artemius, the prison warder, told him that he had a daughter named Paulina who was possessed by demons; Peter explained that if she wished to be cured, she should believe in Christ (c. 1). Artemius said that he would himself become a Christian if Peter could reveal the Christian God's power by escaping from the chains in which he was being held, and which Artemius undertook to augment (c. 2). Artemius reported this to his wife Candida, who asked why they should not believe, if Peter could indeed cure their daughter Paulina; Peter arrived at their house that night, freed from his chains and having escaped from prison, whereupon Artemius and Candida threw themselves at his feet, and Peter immediately expelled the demon from Paulina (c. 3). Reports of this miracle circulated, and 300 men with their wives arrived at the house of Artemius; Peter brought the priest Marcellinus to the house, and they were all baptized (c. 4). The prison registrars ordered Artemius to appear before the tribunal of Serenus the deputy; Artemius explained to Serenus that Peter had released all the Christians in prison, but had remained there himself, together with Marcellinus (c. 5). Marcellinus and Peter were brought before the tribunal of Serenus, with the result that Marcellinus was severely beaten and forced to lie on broken glass (c. 6). Peter remonstrated

¹ Listed *BHL* 5230 and *CPL* 2206; discussed Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 163–4; *DACL* XIV/1, cols. 981–1018 [H. Leclercq]; *BSS* VIII, cols. 657–8 [A. Amore]; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 291–2; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 115–16 [Marcellinus and Peter], 116–18 [Tiburtius], 255–6 [Artemius].

² On the cemetery *inter duas lauros*, and the shrine of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, see nn. 5–6.

with Serenus, and was himself placed in stocks (c. 7). An angel appeared to Marcellinus, and took him first to Peter, and then took the two of them to the crowd of Christians who had recently been baptized, in order that they might comfort them (c. 8). Because Marcellinus and Peter were not to be found in prison, Artemius, together with his wife and daughter, was summoned before Serenus and, after refusing to sacrifice, they were all sentenced to be buried alive under a pile of builders' rubble on the Via Aurelia (c. 9). Marcellinus and Peter, who were going to the support of Artemius, were accosted by a crowd, and were detained; Artemius was killed by a sword stroke and Candida was thrown down a stairwell at the catacomb, after which they were both buried under a heap of stones (c. 10). Marcellinus and Peter were taken out to *Silva Candida* and beheaded there (c. 11). While two Christian matrons named Lucilla and Firmina were attending to the tomb of their relative St Tiburtius, who had recently been martyred, he appeared to them in a vision, in the company of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, and instructed them to recover their bodies and to bury them near him, in a lower gallery of the same catacomb (c. 12). Damasus, while still a *lector*, had learned of all this from the executioner who had beheaded Marcellinus and Peter, and so was able to describe their martyrdom in an epigram, which is quoted in full (c. 13). The executioner, named Dorotheus, subsequently repented and reported the events to Pope Julius; Lucilla recovered the bodies of Marcellinus and Peter, and buried them near that of St Tiburtius on the Via Labicana (c. 14).

The earliest surviving evidence for the cult of SS. Marcellinus and Peter is the epigram of Pope Damasus quoted *in extenso* in c. 13 of the present *passio*. The witness of the *passio* is exceptionally valuable, because—unusually—the epigram is not preserved in any later medieval *sylloge*, and no more than a few tiny fragments of the tablet have ever been found. The epigram is as follows:³

O Marcellinus, and likewise Peter, (the story of) your burial
the executioner told to me, Damasus, when I was a boy—
that a crazed butcher had given him these orders,
that he was to cut off your heads in the midst of a brier-patch
so that no one could identify your graves;
that you happily dug your graves with your own hands,
that you afterwards had lain stainlessly⁴ hidden in the tomb.
Thereafter Lucilla, alerted (in a vision) by your devout intervention,
was pleased to bury your holy remains here instead.

It will be seen that the epigram provided the author of the *passio* with substantial elements of his narrative: the execution of the saints in an

³ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 160–2 [no. 28]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 132–4; trans. Appendix II (k), pp. 643–4.

⁴ For the rare adverb *candidule*, see TLL III, col. 239, and Souter, p. 37. Damasus' use of this word perhaps carries an allusion to the place where the martyrs were originally buried (*Silva Candida*).

inaccessible place (c. 11); their appearance to Lucilla in a vision and their instructions to her to translate their remains (c. 12); and their final deposition 'here' instead—that is, in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana (c. 14). The date (2 June) and place of their deposition are given in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* at the fourth mile of the Via Labicana, Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist' (Appendix III, p. 653). The date (2 June) evidently pertains to the day on which their translated remains were deposited in the cemetery on the Via Labicana; there appears to be no martyrological record of their previous burial in *Silva Nigra* (*Candida*).

The principal shrine of SS. Marcellinus and Peter was a crypt in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* on the Via Labicana; the crypt in question is that identified as G5 in (what is called) Region X of the cemetery.⁵ Archaeological investigations conducted by Jean Guyon have succeeded in establishing that the crypt housing the two Roman martyrs was in existence by no later than 340 (and may already have existed at the time of the 'Great Persecution' when, as far as can be determined, the two were martyred), and that it was extensively remodelled under Pope Damasus so as to facilitate access to the tomb by large numbers of worshippers and pilgrims, by providing a staircase linking their tomb with the church above (see the next paragraph). The remodelling by Pope Damasus also involved the placement of an engraved tablet in Filocalian lettering containing the epigram on SS. Marcellinus and Peter which is preserved uniquely in the present *passio* (c. 13) and was originally placed over the tombs of the two martyrs.⁶

The cemetery *inter duas lauros* was established on a huge imperial estate, and was originally developed to accommodate deceased members of the *equites singulares*, that is, members of the imperial bodyguard; it subsequently became a Christian cemetery. On this site Constantine built a great mausoleum to house the remains of his mother, the Empress Helena, who died in c. 330, and, adjacent to the mausoleum, a magnificent basilica, which lay above

⁵ See Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 312–34; Styger, *Märtyrergriifte*, I, pp. 205–12; Cecchelli and Persico, *SS. Marcellino e Pietro* (whose account of the catacombs has, however, been entirely superseded by the excavations of Jean Guyon); Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 80–4; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 236–9, with fig. 72; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 162–6; and esp. Guyon, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*, pp. 104–21, with fig. 77 (p. 120) and 499–505 (Annexe I: La crypte des saints Marcellin et Pierre et ses abords), as well as *idem*, 'Duas lauros (inter), coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 209–15; *idem*, 'Marcellini et Petri coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, p. 25; and Giordani, 'Postille in margine al complesso', pp. 133–43.

⁶ See Guyon, 'L'oeuvre de Damase', pp. 228–38 ('Le crypte des saints Marcellin et Pierre'), with figs. 1–7, of which fig. 2 is a photograph of the *loculi* of the two saints, fig. 4 a reconstruction showing the original placement of the Damasian epigram over the *loculi*, and fig. 7, a reconstruction of the crypt of SS. Marcellinus and Peter in the years c.400.

the catacombs, and which was connected to them by means of a staircase.⁷ This Constantinian church was a three-aisled ambulatory basilica similar in design to other Constantinian basilicas such as that dedicated to the Apostles, which subsequently became S. Sebastiano. By the same token, the basilica on the Via Labicana may originally have been dedicated to the Martyrs, but subsequently became SS. Marcellino e Pietro. Nothing now survives of this once great basilica except fragments of the foundations, and it is known principally through excavation.

The basilica, and the underlying crypt of the two martyrs, appears to have been destroyed at the time of the Gothic wars (mid-sixth century: 537–c.560); it is for this reason that the tablet containing the Damasan epigram no longer survives *in situ*, implying that it must have been seen and copied by the author of the present *passio* at some time before its destruction. By the end of the sixth century, there was an intra-urban *titulus*-church in Rome dedicated to SS. Marcellinus and Peter,⁸ as proved by the fact that the Roman synod held under Gregory the Great in 595 was attended by a priest named Albinus ‘*tituli sanctorum Marcellini et Petri*’,⁹ and it would seem possible that the relics of the two saints were translated to the intra-urban church for safety’s sake at the time of the Gothic invasions. The precise location of this *titulus*-church is unknown, but it was arguably in the vicinity of the present church of SS. Marcellino e Pietro on the Via Merulana, near to the Lateran. In the early eighth century, Pope Gregory III (731–41) rebuilt an earlier church dedicated to SS. Marcellinus and Peter ‘in the vicinity of the Lateran’ (*iuxta Lateranis*);¹⁰ but the date of this earlier church cannot be established, save that it must have been in existence by 595. The implication seems to be that the cult of SS. Marcellinus and Peter was transferred from the cemetery and basilica on

⁷ On the Constantinian basilica, see Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 193–204 and pl. XV; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 55–60, with fig. 72 and pl. IV (reconstruction); J. Guyon, ‘SS. Marcellini et Petri basilica’, *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 19–25, with figs. 13–23; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 54–60.

⁸ On this *titulus*-church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 419–20; G. De Spirito, ‘SS. Marcellinus et Petrus in Lateranis, titulus’, *LTUR* III, pp. 210–11; Claudia Angelelli, ‘La chiesa titolare dei SS. Marcellino e Pietro. Una revisione sulla base di nuovi documenti’, *RACr* 76 (2000), 287–350, and *eadem*, ‘Nuove osservazioni sulle chiese Siriciane di Roma’, in Guidobaldi and Guidobaldi, *Ecclesiae Urbis*, II, pp. 1019–31, at 1021–8; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, p. 145.

⁹ *MGH, Epist.* I, p. 367.

¹⁰ *LP*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 420; Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 26: ‘He [Gregory III] rebuilt SS. Marcellinus and Peter’s church close to the Lateran’; see discussion by Coates-Stephens, ‘Dark Age Architecture in Rome’, pp. 193–5. In the early eighteenth century an inscription was found on the site which implied that the church had been founded by Pope Siricius (384–98); but Huelsen thought the evidence unreliable (*Le chiese*, p. 420: ‘ma questa congettura è poco fondata’). By the same token, Kirsch (*Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 54–8) argued that the *titulus* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter was identical to that which had been represented a century earlier at the synod of 499 as *titulus Nicomedis*; but the identification cannot be proved, because the location of the *titulus Nicomedis* is wholly unknown.

the Via Labicana to the intra-urban *titulus*-church near the Lateran. Since the present *passio* knows nothing whatsoever of this intra-urban church, it was arguably composed before the translation took place.

The other martyrs mentioned in the *passio* need brief discussion.

SS. *Artemius, Candida, and Paulina*.¹¹ According to the present *passio*, these three martyrs were executed by being buried alive at an unspecified location on the Via Aurelia (cc. 9–10).¹² The author does not give the date of their martyrdom; none of the three is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, and the site of their burial is not recorded in any of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries.

St *Tiburtius*.¹³ The date of Tiburtius' martyrdom is not given by the author of the *passio* and is not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum*, but in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* he is commemorated against 11 August as follows: 'Rome, on the Via Labicana *inter duas lauros*, the death of Tiburtius' (Appendix III, p. 655). It was perhaps the fact that this Tiburtius was buried in the cemetery which housed the remains of SS. Marcellinus and Peter which prompted the author to invent the story of his appearance, in company with the latter two martyrs, in a vision to the matrons Lucilla and Firmina (c. 12). In any event, the burial of St Tiburtius in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* is commemorated in an epigram of Damasus, which must once have been placed near his tomb:¹⁴

At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
this outstanding martyr, having scorned the emperor of the world,
blessedly seeks the realms of heaven, with Christ as his companion.
Holy distinction and praise will remain here for you forever.
I ask, O (martyr) dear to God, kindly Tiburtius, that you favour Damasus.

The tomb of St Tiburtius was located on the surface of the ground, directly above the shrine of SS. Marcellinus and Peter.¹⁵ The identity of this martyr, Tiburtius, however, is uncertain. He is evidently to be distinguished from the

¹¹ Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 68–9; BSS II, col. 490 [A. Amore]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 255–6.

¹² It has been suggested that the place of their burial is to be sought in the cemetery of S. Pancrazio (Via Aurelia): Verrando, 'Note di topografia martiriale', p. 270; and *idem*, 'La chiesa di S. Pancrazio e le sottostanti regioni cimiteriali', *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria* 113 (1990), 31–82, at 67. But this localization is no more than a conjecture.

¹³ BSS XII, cols. 465–6 [A. Amore]; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 116–18.

¹⁴ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 164–5 [no. 31]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 135–6; trans. Appendix II (I), p. 644.

¹⁵ We know from the *Liber pontificalis* that Pope Hadrian I (772–95) built a roof over the shrine of St Tiburtius and provided a staircase leading down into the catacombs, implying that the shrine of St Tiburtius was above ground (LP, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 500; Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 145). For the probable location of his tomb, see Guyon, 'L'oeuvre de Damase', pp. 238–44; *idem*, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*, pp. 407–9; Giordani, 'Postille in margine', pp. 132 and 142; and Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 165–6.

Tiburtius, brother of Valerian, whose martyrdom is described in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV.24) and who was buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia. A martyr named Tiburtius figures prominently in the *passio* of St Sebastian, where he is described as the son of the urban prefect Chromatius who, like his father, is converted by St Sebastian and inevitably suffers martyrdom as a result; according to that *passio*, he is said to have been buried at the third mile of the Via Labicana (III.82), that is to say, in the cemetery *inter duas lauros*.

Text. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Iunii* I [1695], pp. 171–3.

1. The benevolence of our Saviour, attested through the determination of His martyrs, went to such lengths that it both crowned the supporters of the faith and snatched their enemies from the very confines of Hell. Accordingly, while Rome was still in the control of pagans,¹⁶ Peter performed the duties of exorcist, even though he was beaten on many occasions and locked in prison, and had been sent into the darkest recesses of the prison and remained there motionless in iron shackles. The jailer (*custos carceris*), named Artemius, had an only daughter named Paulina, a virgin, whom he loved with singular affection; since she was being troubled by a demon and was crying every day, Peter the exorcist, the man of God, said to him: ‘Listen to my advice, Artemius; and believe in the only-begotten Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the deliverer of all who believe in Him; if you were truly to believe, your daughter would straightway be saved.’ He urged the faith on Artemius. Artemius replied to him: ‘I admire the wisdom of your advice: your God cannot deliver you, even though you believe in Him, and suffer daily beatings and fetters on behalf of His name: how could He deliver my daughter, if I were to believe in Him?’ And Peter said: ‘My Lord is perfectly capable of liberating me from these chains, and from all punishments, but He does not wish to compromise my crown; He wishes that I complete my course through martyrdom in this world, so that I can attain eternal glory.’

2. Artemius said: ‘If you wish me to believe in your God, here’s what I’ll do: I will today multiply the chains on you and will strengthen all the redoubts of the prison; I will enclose you in solitary confinement in a dark cell. And if your God should free you from all these, I will believe in Him; and I will do this when I see that my daughter has been delivered (from demons).’ Then the blessed Peter said, smiling: ‘The weakness of your faith will be strengthened, if you will do what you say.’ Artemius said: ‘I shall believe in Him, if He can

¹⁶ Unusually for a *passio*, no statement is made here concerning the emperor(s) under whom the martyrdoms took place. However, the fact that Pope Damasus, while still a boy, had met the executioner of the saints (according to the Damasan epigram quoted below, c. 13), implies that the martyrdoms took place during the so-called ‘Great Persecution’ under Diocletian and Maximian, which began in February 303 and—in Rome and Italy at least—had ceased by 306.

snatch you from these chains.’ Peter said: ‘Go to your home, and prepare a place for me to stay: because, without you opening (the prison) for me, nor freeing me from these fetters, nor showing me the way to your house, I shall come to you there, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ. And when I get there, your hands will touch me and your eyes will verify me, and I will have this same conversation with you: and if you should believe in this way, your daughter will be delivered. This will take place, not at the whim of your testing, but for establishing the divinity of my Lord Jesus Christ.’ Shaking his head, Artemius said: ‘This man, exhausted by his extreme suffering, is talking nonsense.’

3. And saying this, he departed; and arriving at his house, he began to relate everything to his wife, named Candida. Candida said to him: ‘I’m astonished that you think him insane who is promising sanity to you; or that he is not being sincere who states that he will bestow sanity on our daughter. Did he set you a long time (for these events to take place)?’ Artemius said: ‘He said that he would come today.’ Candida said: ‘If he should do this, who could doubt that Christ is the true God, in Whom he believes?’ Artemius said: ‘I am horrified at your foolishness. Even if the gods themselves were to descend from the heavens, they could not release him from the fetters: even if Jupiter himself were to go to him, he could not open up (the prison) for him.’ Candida replied: ‘In any case his God will be glorified, and it will be necessary to believe in Him if He should accomplish this, which even Jupiter himself could not do.’ And while the two of them were discussing these things, and night was revealing its onset with the brilliance of the stars, the light of day having departed, Peter, the man of God, arrived at (the house of) Artemius and Candida, dressed in shining garments, having in his hand the victorious sign of the Cross. Artemius with his wife Candida fell at his feet and shouted out, saying, ‘Truly there is one God, and Jesus Christ is the true Lord.’ And straightway their daughter Paulina, in name and body a virgin, who had been troubled by the impure spirit, also confessed God, falling at Peter’s feet, and she was cleansed, such that the demon shouted out from the air, saying, ‘The power of Christ which is in you, Peter, has expelled me, and expelled me from the virginity of Paulina.’

4. And while these events were taking place, all those persons in the household of Artemius were baptized and became believers. A messenger ran to those who were living in a neighbouring place, so that the multitude grew to more than three hundred men; the number of women was even larger, all of them shouting out and saying: ‘There is no omnipotent God other than Christ: in His¹⁷ sight all those possessed by demons will be delivered, and all sick persons will be cured.’ And when all those who had assembled in the

¹⁷ Reading *eius* for the Bollandists’ *eorum* (which I do not understand).

house of Artemius wished with one will to become Christians, Peter, the man of God, departed, and brought St Marcellinus the priest, by whom all those in the house of Artemius were baptized. This Artemius, even though he was the custodian of the prison, went in to those who were in chains, and said to them: 'If anyone wishes to believe in Christ, he may go free, and come to my house so that he can turn himself into a Christian.' All the prisoners, promising to believe in Christ, left the prison; and coming to the house of Artemius, were baptized by St Marcellinus the priest, having seen the light through their consecration. Meanwhile, while these events were taking place, a noxious judge (*iudex*) named Serenus fell ill, and during the whole period of his illness, time was granted to all those who had been baptized so that they could be comforted in Christ by the daily conversation of Marcellinus the priest and Peter; this continued for forty days and more.

5. Thereafter the prison registrars (*commentarienses*)¹⁸ sent to Artemius the prison-warder, demanding that he present himself at night with those persons who were in prison. All those who had been baptized kissed their hands and said that if anyone wished to proceed to martyrdom, he should go forth undaunted; (but) if anyone wished to depart, he should go away unharmed. When, therefore, Serenus the deputy (*vicarius*)¹⁹ was sitting (in tribunal) at cockcrow, and commanded that those people whose cases were to be heard be sent in, Artemius entered and said: 'Peter, the exorcist of Christians, whom you commanded to be punished and left half-alive in prison, has released the chains of everyone in the name of his God, and opened the prison doors for everyone; and making them all Christians, he made them go wherever they wanted. He, however, along with Marcellinus the priest, never left the prison of his own will; and however often I wished to keep him in custody, he was nowhere to be seen.'

6. Then Serenus the deputy (*vicarius*), burning with exceeding rage, ordered Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist to be brought in at the announcement of the court interrogator (*quaestionarius*).²⁰ When they had been

¹⁸ The *commentariensis* was the official responsible for the custody of prisoners and supervision of a staff of torturers; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 522 and 587; Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, pp. 57–9; and Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*, p. 158: 'a rank below the centurionate, found on the office staff of most magistrates; his function was the keeping of records...he was particularly responsible for the custody of those accused, the keeping of records of criminal proceedings, and the supervision of putting into effect any sentence passed.'

¹⁹ The 'deputy' (*vicarius*) served as second-in-command to a prefect, in this case presumably the urban prefect of Rome: see Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, p. 19, and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 62–5. Needless to say, perhaps, no *vicarius* named Serenus is attested for this period (see *PLRE* I, pp. 1077–9).

²⁰ On the noun *quaestionarius*, literally 'interrogator', but—given the increasing severity of criminal trials in late antiquity—in effect 'torturer', see Souter, p. 337, who cites three inscriptions as recording the form (*CIL* II, no. 4156, III, no. 12401, and VIII, no. 20251), all of fourth-century date; cf. also Introduction, above, p. 17.

brought in, Serenus said: 'The executioners would deal more gently with you, if you were to omit the sacrilege of your Christianity; it is enough that you have caused scum and criminals to depart from prison.' Marcellinus the priest said: 'A man remains criminally responsible for his crime for as long as he does not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ: but when he believes, he is immediately cleansed of all guilt, and is called the son of the highest God.' As Marcellinus the priest was saying these and similar things, Serenus ordered him to be beaten with fists on his throat.²¹ And when warders beating him had stopped from exhaustion, he ordered him to be separated from Peter, and to be sent naked to a place where broken glass had been scattered, and to be enclosed there in bonds, and light and water to be denied to him.

7. Peter the exorcist, turning to Serenus, said: 'Even though you are "bright" through your name (*serenus*), you show yourself to be murky and shadowy through your deeds; and although you are a mortal man, you promise punishments, thinking that you can disturb by means of threats and terrors the immortal faith which reigns in Christian hearts. What is more, you have had beaten with fists and confined to severe custody Marcellinus the priest, whom you ought to have begged to pray for you, so that you could be released from the crimes of your disbelief. Because of this he is indeed exulting and rejoicing, but you will be (placed in) eternal wailing and never-ending tears.' Then Serenus ordered Peter, too, to be placed in chains, and his feet to be enclosed in tightly-restricted stocks.

8. Now it so happened, while they were separated in their individual confinements—with Marcellinus the priest placed naked on broken glass and Peter the exorcist in chains and stocks—that an angel of the Lord appeared to Marcellinus the priest while he was praying, and dressed him in his clothing, and said to him: 'Follow me.' And while Marcellinus the priest was following the angel, he entered with him the place where Peter the exorcist was in chains and stocks; and he released him, and said to them: 'Follow me.' And while they were following him, they arrived at the house in which all those who had been baptized were praying in one spirit. The angel said to them that they should comfort for seven days the people who had come to believe through them, and after seven days should show themselves to Serenus the deputy (*vicarius*).

²¹ The Latin says that he was beaten 'on both arteries' (*in arteriis ambabus*). Roman medicine taught that there were two 'arteries' in the throat, one being what we call the wind-pipe (*arteria aspera*), the other being the oesophagus; see *TLL* II, cols. 686–7, s.v. 'arteria', with the citation from Celsus, *De medicina* i. 4 ('deinde duo itinera incipiunt: alterum asperam arteriam nominant; alterum stomachum. arteria exterior ad pulmonem, stomachus interior ad ventriculum fertur; illa spiritum, hic cibum recipit'), as well as discussion by Langslow, *Medical Latin in the Roman Empire*, p. 474.

9. The following day messengers were sent to the prison, and neither Peter nor Marcellinus was found by the investigators. And since they could not be found, this was announced to the judge (*iudex*). Then the judge ordered Artemius to be sent for, together with his wife Candida and their daughter Paulina the virgin; when he had seen them, he compelled them to sacrifice to the gods. Artemius, and his wife Candida, together with their daughter, said as follows: 'We confess our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, and therefore we can on no account be polluted by the ceremony of sacrifice.' When he had heard this, Serenus the deputy ordered them all to be buried under an immense weight of builders' rubble on the Via Aurelia. It happened that, at the hour in which they were going to their martyrdom, in that same place all the Christians were hastening to meet St Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist; and the officials, seeing such a great crowd, fled. But some of the younger members of the Christian crowd, following after them, seized them and began to urge them in gentle speech to convert to the faith. Since they did not wish to believe, they were eventually guarded by the crowd until Marcellinus the priest should say mass in the crypt in which the saints had come to be executed. And when the things pertaining to God were completed [i.e. the mass], the entire crowd departed from the priest.

10. And when silence had been restored, Marcellinus stood there with Peter, saying to those who did not wish to believe: 'You see that it was within our power to do you harm, but we did not do so; it was in our power that we could take Artemius and Candida and their virgin daughter from you, but we did not do this either; then it was in our power, through the grace of God, that we could escape, but we did not do that either. What is your opinion of all this?' But they, raging against the men of God, struck down Artemius with a sword, but as for St Candida and the virgin daughter, they threw them down a steep stairwell, that is, at the entrance to the catacomb, and buried them with stones. As for Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist, they tied them, with their hands bound tightly behind their backs, to a tree, and left some people to watch over them until it could be reported to the deputy.

11. And when the deputy had taken in everything which had happened, he ordered them to be led to the 'Dark Woods' (*Silva Nigra*), which today are called the 'Bright Woods' (*Silva Candida*) in honour of the saints,²² and both

²² The area known as *Silva Candida* was an ecclesiastical diocese lying to the west of Rome; a synod at Rome in 501 was attended by *Adeodatus episcopus Silvae Candidae* (MGH, AA XII, p. 433). It was in this diocese that SS. Rufina and Secunda were buried (at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia: see no. XXXI.8), and as a result of their prestige, the diocese eventually became known by their name. On the diocese of *Silva Candida*, see L. Duchesne, 'Le sedi episcopali nell'antico ducato di Roma', *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria* 15 (1892), 475–503, at 483–5; R. Motta and L. Ungaro, 'Le diocesi intorno a Roma: il caso di *Silva Candida*', in *Atti del VI Congresso nazionale di archeologia cristiana*, 2 vols. (Ancona, 1985), I, pp. 327–36; Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri del Lazio*, I. *Etruria meridionale*, p. 58; Cotton, Wheeler, and Whitehouse,

of them were to be beheaded there. When they arrived in the midst of the woods, the martyrs cleaned the place of thorns with their own hands; praying in this place, and giving each other the kiss of peace, on bended knee they were decapitated. Those who decapitated them testified that they had seen their souls leaving their bodies in the form of young virgins, adorned with jewels and gold and dressed in shining clothing, and, borne up by angels, they rejoiced to be carried through the air to heaven.

12. Lucilla and Firmina were two devout Christian women, kinsfolk of St Tiburtius the martyr,²³ whose nobility on earth was great among the senatorial classes, and is proved to be even more magnificent among the martyrs in heaven. When these two, out of love for their kinsman, did not depart from his tomb, and had built there a little sleeping-chamber for themselves, and spent day and night there, St Tiburtius appeared to them in a vision with the two recent martyrs [Marcellinus and Peter], and explained to them how they should set off and recover their bodies from the 'Dark Woods', and bury them near him in the catacomb in its lower gallery; two acolytes of the Roman church were of assistance to them.

13. Damasus, while still a lector, learned all this as a young boy from the man who had beheaded them, and, subsequently having been made bishop, he explained it in these verses:

O Marcellinus, and likewise Peter, (the story of) your burial
the executioner told to me, Damasus, when I was a boy—
that a crazed butcher had given him these orders,
that he was to cut off your heads in the midst of a brier-patch
so that no one could identify your graves;
that you happily dug your graves with your own hands,
that you afterwards had lain stainlessly hidden in the tomb.
Thereafter Lucilla, alerted (in a vision) by your devout intervention,
was pleased to bury your holy remains here instead.

14. The man who beheaded them, named Dorotheus, performed public penance while still a pagan, reporting all he had seen to Pope Julius and the entire populace;²⁴ and he was baptized in old age, and through his good

'Santa Rufina', pp. 214–23 [P. Llewellyn, 'The Historical Record. The Bishopric of *Silva Candida* at Santa Rufina', in *Three South Etrurian Churches: Santa Cornelia, Santa Rufina and San Liberato*, ed. N. Christie (London, 1991)]; and Saxer, 'Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie', pp. 47–8. Under Pope Callistus II (1119–24) the diocese of *Silva Candida* was suppressed and combined with that of Porto. The present *passio* is apparently the only source to state that the area was known as *Silva Nigra* before the martyrdoms of SS. Marcellinus and Peter; see also no. XXXI.8 (p. 556, n. 13).

²³ St Tiburtius is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 11 August: 'Rome, on the Via Labicana *inter duas lauros*, the death of Tiburtius' (Appendix III, p. 655).

²⁴ On Pope Julius (337–52), see *EP I*, pp. 334–40 [M. Simonetti].

confession attained to the Saviour's mercy, to Whom is praise and glory forever and ever. Amen. Lucilla recovered their bodies, that is the bodies of the martyrs Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist, and placed them in a carriage by night, and took them to the Via Labicana at the third mile from the city, and buried them peacefully there on 2 June.²⁵

²⁵ This is the date of commemoration in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, in the cemetery *ad duas lauros* at the fourth mile of the Via Labicana, Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist' (Appendix III, p. 653). In fact the cemetery *inter duas lauros* is at the third, not the fourth, mile of the Via Labicana, as the *passio* correctly states.

XXIV

The Four Crowned Martyrs

*c.600; relevant to the cemetery *inter duas lauros* (Via Labicana), and the *titulus*-church of the Four Crowned Martyrs (Caelian Hill)*

At an imposing site on the Caelian Hill in Rome, from perhaps as early as the fourth century, there was a church which, from at least the sixth century onwards, was dedicated to four saints known as the ‘Four Crowned Martyrs’, and it is hardly surprising that a *passio* should have been composed to celebrate their martyrdom.¹ But although they were commemorated in a prominent and centrally-located Roman church, they appear to have been martyred not in Rome but in faraway Pannonia, and the ways by which these Pannonian martyrs came to be culted in Rome constitute a matter of such complexity that it is probably insoluble. I begin by providing a brief synopsis of the *passio*, which consists of two discrete parts: the first (cc. 1–21) concerning the activities and martyrdom of the saints in Pannonia; and the second (c. 22) concerning the martyrdom in Rome of four seemingly distinct martyrs with the same names.

The Pannonian ‘passio’ (cc. 1–21). Diocletian travelled to Pannonia to inspect the stone quarries and found there four excellent stonemasons who happened to be Christians, named Claudius, Castorius, Sympronianus, and Nicostratus; he commissioned them to carve a statue of the Sun god riding in his chariot (c. 1). When the engineers and stonemasons visited the quarry,

¹ Listed *BHL* 1836–7 and *CPL* 2248a; for discussion, see M. Petschenig, ‘Zur Kritik und Würdigung der Passio sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum’, *Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Classe der k. Akademie der Wissenschaften* [Vienna] 97 (1880), 761–79; W. Wattenbach, ‘Über die Legende von den heiligen Vier Gekrönten’, *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (1896), pp. 1281–302; Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 153–4; Duchesne, ‘Le culte romain des Quatre-Couronnés’; Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘I santi Quattro’, pp. 57–66; H. Delehaye, ‘Le culte des Quatre Couronnés’; *idem*, *Étude sur le légendaire romain*, pp. 64–73; *idem*, *Les Passions des martyrs*, pp. 236–46; J. P. Kirsch, ‘Die *passio* der heiligen “Vier Gekrönten”’; *DACL* XIV/2, cols. 2009–14 [H. Leclercq]; A. Amore, ‘I santi Quattro Coronati’; J. Guyon, ‘Les Quatre Couronnés’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Antiquité* 87 (1975), 505–61; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, pp. 66–74; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 290–1; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 122–5.

there was disagreement among them about where to extract the requisite block of marble, but Sympronius took charge on behalf of his four colleagues—Claudius, Simplicius, Nicostratus, and Castorius—with the result that a statue twenty-five feet high was produced (c. 2). Diocletian was delighted with the result, and the statue was gilded and placed in a nearby temple of the Sun; he further commissioned from them some columns with capitals to be made of porphyry (c. 3). While they were cutting the stone into forty-foot blocks, the iron tools of Simplicius, who was a pagan, kept shattering; he mentioned this problem to his four Christian colleagues (c. 4). Diocletian then commissioned some conchs from Sympronius, Claudius, Castorius, and Nicostratus (c. 5). When the ironworking tools of Simplicius continued to break, and he saw that his Christian colleagues were being aided by the prayers they offered to their God, he asked to become a Christian; they took him to Cyrillus, the former bishop of Antioch who had been sentenced to penal servitude in the same quarries (c. 6). Cyrillus duly baptized Simplicius (c. 7). While they were at work on the conchs, one of the engineers noticed that they made the sign of the Cross over their work; suspecting sorcery, he interrogated them (c. 8). On hearing the discussion between the engineer and the Christian stonemasons, many other stonemasons were converted to Christianity (c. 9). The conchs were completed and were found to be pleasing to Diocletian, whereupon he commissioned some porphyry capitals (c. 10). This further commission enraged the engineers, but the Christians nevertheless continued their work for three months (c. 11). When one, and then another, capital had been completed, the engineers suspected that they had been produced through forbidden magical arts, and they voiced this suspicion to Diocletian; but he merely expressed his admiration for the skill of the Christian stonemasons, and then commissioned still more works from them, including a statue of Asclepius (c. 12). They produced all the other works, but refused to make the statue of Asclepius (c. 13). The engineers told Diocletian that they had refused to make the statue because of their Christian belief, and so Diocletian summoned them to him (c. 14). Diocletian again expressed his admiration for their work, but insisted that they produce the statue of Asclepius; when they refused, the engineers undertook to find pagan stonemasons who would willingly carry out the commission (c. 15). The engineers chastised Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius, and then selected other stonemasons to do the work, and so the statue of Asclepius was completed (c. 16). Diocletian then handed over the five Christian stonemasons to a tribune named Lampadius, with orders to bring them to trial at a tribunal before the temple of the Sun (c. 17). At the first hearing, they were asked to worship the idol of the Sun god which they had made with their own hands, but they refused; when this refusal was reported to Diocletian, he determined to eliminate them if they would not sacrifice (c. 18). They were again brought to trial, and refused yet again to sacrifice to the Sun god (c. 19). They were

accordingly subjected to torture, and while they were being tortured, Lampadius himself was seized by a demon and died; Diocletian ordered the five Christians to be placed in lead caskets and drowned, whereupon Bishop Cyrillus, hearing of their deaths, fell down dead: they all suffered martyrdom on 9 November (c. 20). Diocletian departed for *Sirmium*, and a Christian named Nicodemus retrieved the caskets and placed them in his house (c. 21).

The Roman 'passio' (c. 22). Diocletian came from *Sirmium* to Rome, where he began to build a temple of Asclepius near to the Baths of Trajan, with a statue of the god to be made out of Proconnesian marble. When the statue was finished, Diocletian ordered all the soldiers in the service of the urban prefecture to sacrifice; but four high-ranking officials (*cornicularii*) of the prefecture refused to do so. Accordingly, they were beaten to death with lead-weighted whips in front of the statue itself. St Sebastian and Bishop Miltiades recovered the bodies and buried them in a catacomb at the third mile of the Via Labicana, on 9 November. Since he was unable to discover their names, Miltiades ordered that they be commemorated under the names of Claudius, Nicostratus, Sympronianus, and Castorius.

The 'Pannonian *passio*' (cc. 1–21) concerns four stonemasons, named Claudius, Castorius, Sympronianus, and Nicostratus, who are secretly Christians;² of the four, Sympronianus speaks as the master carver, and describes the others as his apprentices (c. 2). These four Christians are apparently the original 'crowned' martyrs—'crowned' (*coronati*) is simply a metonym for 'martyr', insofar as all those who were executed for their Christian faith were deemed to be 'crowned with martyrdom'³—but they are accompanied throughout by a fifth colleague named Simplicius, originally a pagan who is converted to Christianity by the example of the four Christian stonemasons, whose work is understood (by Simplicius) to progress so well because they invoke Christ's assistance in their labours. After his conversion, and baptism by Bishop Cyrillus, Simplicius achieves the crown of martyrdom alongside his four colleagues (c. 20). The 'Pannonian *passio*', in other words, is actually an account of 'Five Crowned Martyrs'.

Unlike nearly all the other *passiones* of Roman martyrs translated in this volume, which are works of pure fiction and preposterous chronology, the

² The text does not explicitly say that they are slaves, but Berschin thinks it likely that they are (*Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, p. 67: 'größenteils wohl Sklaven'). Some of their colleagues—e.g. Bishop Cyrillus—are obviously Christians who have been convicted and sentenced to penal servitude *ad metalla*; but, again, the text does not imply condemned status for Claudius, Castorius, Sympronianus, and Nicostratus, and the esteem in which they come to be held by Diocletian may suggest otherwise. Interestingly, Mócsy observes that the products of the stonemasons' yards in Pannonia were produced 'according to the traditions of northern Italy and with craftsmen who either came from there or were apprenticed to northern Italians' (*Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, p. 179). The names of the four (five) 'Crowned Martyrs'—esp. Claudius, Castorius, and Simplicius—suggest that they were of Italian origin.

³ See *TLL* IV, col. 992 (lines 58–68), s.v. 'coronatus'.

narrative of the 'Pannonian *passio*' seems largely reliable as history. A leading Roman historian (T. D. Barnes) was prepared to accept a statement in c. 21 as historical evidence for the movements of Diocletian in AD 303.⁴ Cyrillus, who baptizes Simplicius (c. 7), is reliably attested as bishop of Antioch by Eusebius (*HE* vii. 32. 2).⁵ The work of the stonemasons (the size of the sculptures, the time required to carve a column, the types of marble involved, the types of decoration, etc.) is described in seemingly realistic detail.⁶ By the same token, the implied location of the stone quarries in the vicinity of *Sirmium* (modern Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia) at what is described as the 'porphyry mountain' (c. 4) has been argued—convincingly, in my view—by students of Pannonian topography as lying in the mountainous region called Fruška Gora in modern Serbia, which lies to the north of *Sirmium* between the rivers Sava and Danube, and was known in Latin as *Alma mons*.⁷ On one particular mountain in Fruška Gora called Kipovno ('hill of the statues' in Serbo-Croat), there are numerous stone quarries, arguably of Roman date, and these quarries are known to be the only source of porphyry in Pannonia.⁸ Objections have been raised to these identifications on various grounds: that there is not sufficient evidence that the quarries in Fruška Gora are of Roman date,⁹ and that an equally plausible candidate for identification as the 'porphyry mountain' may

⁴ See n. 27. ⁵ See n. 35.

⁶ The 'realistic' detail may be deceptive. András Mócsy points out that 'industry in Pannonia and Upper Moesia did not produce any specialty of significance... These Pannonian products were small votive tablets of the so-called Danubian Rider-God or of Mithras, made from the soft yellowish crystalline limestone of the Alma Mons (Fruška Gora)' (*Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, p. 246, and cf. *ibid.* pp. 180–1: 'It is only rarely that the products of stonemasons' workshops can be regarded as works of art'). In other words, the fine works of art commissioned by Diocletian from Pannonian stonemasons described in the present *passio* are figments of the author's imagination.

⁷ The name Fruška Gora means 'Frankish Mountain' in Serbo-Croat. In Late Latin sources the mountainous region is called *Alma Mons*: see Eutropius, *Breviarium* ix. 17 ('*Almam montem apud Sirmium*') and *SHA*, 'Probus', xviii. 8 ('*Almam montem in Illyrico circa Sirmium*'). The Latin noun *mons* is masc., so the word *Alma* here cannot be the Latin adjective *almus* ('nourishing', 'bountiful'), but must be an unexplained name. For its location, see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 21 (B4). Since 1960, Fruška Gora has been a national park.

⁸ See Frane Bulić, 'Qualche cosa proviene del Palazzo di Diocleziano a Spalato, per es. qualche colonna, qualche pezzo architettonico ed ornamentale, qualche statua dalle lapicide di Sirmium (Fruška Gora nella Slavonia)?', *Bullettino di archeologia e storia Dalmata* 31 (1908), 111–27, esp. 114, followed by J. Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain* (Paris, 1918), pp. 79–88.

⁹ See D. F. S. Peacock, 'The *Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum*: A Petrological Approach', *Antiquity* 69 (1995), 362–8, at 364: he argues that Bulić (as cited at n. 8) gives 'no reason why the quarries should be dated to the Roman period' and that 'whatever their characteristics, the outcrops of dacite andesite are minute and unlikely to have supported a major Roman industry... On geological as well as philological grounds, Fruška Gora has little to recommend it.' I do not know what the philological grounds might be, and Peacock (p. 367) confesses himself unable to read the *passio* in the original language. The allusion to the *Alma Mons* as *Mons Pinguis* (c. 3) is unambiguous philological evidence that the author sites his narrative in Pannonia (see n. 30).

be found further away from *Sirmium*, north of the Danube, at Geresd Mountain near Pécs (Roman *Sopianae*) in modern Hungary.¹⁰ But these objections do not carry conviction.

The author's familiarity with the topography of Pannonia and the absence of any reference whatsoever to Rome suggest that the 'Pannonian *passio*' (cc. 1–21) was composed in Pannonia, probably at some date in the fifth century, or possibly even earlier.¹¹ It is odd, however, that after the bodies of the five martyrs have been recovered from the river (Sava? Danube?) by Nicodemus, and placed in his house (c. 21), the 'Pannonian *passio*' makes no mention of a church to which the remains were translated or to a sanctuary in which they were worshipped. One wonders if the present c. 22 (the 'Roman *passio*') has replaced an earlier chapter describing the site of the martyrs' cult in Pannonia.

The cult of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' is a Roman phenomenon. At some point before the sixth century the 'Pannonian *passio*' was transmitted to Rome; but by this time there were various traditions concerning local Roman martyrs with names similar to those of the Pannonian martyrs. Over time, the details of the 'Pannonian *passio*' had to be assimilated to those of Roman tradition. The following details are known from Roman tradition, the earliest evidence of which is preserved in an entry which was compiled before 354, and perhaps by c.336, against 9 November in the *Depositio martyrum*: 'Clementis Semproniani Clau*i* Nicostrati in comitatum' (Appendix I, p. 636: 'Clement, Sympronianus, Clau<di>us, Nicostratus, *in comitatum*'). Note that the date of commemoration here—9 November—is that given in the 'Pannonian *passio*' (c. 20), but that Simplicius is not mentioned, the name *Claudius* is corruptly transmitted, and the name *Clemens* has no correlate in the 'Pannonian *passio*'; on the location of the cemetery *in comitatum*, see below. In Roman tradition, in a word, the 'five crowned martyrs' have become four. The next witness to these martyrs is the entry for 8 November in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* of c.450: 'Rome, on the Caelian Hill, Sympronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, and Castor' (Appendix III, p. 657). The mention of a shrine on the Caelian Hill is a reflex of the importance of the basilica of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' (see below); otherwise, the names of the four martyrs in question are the same as those in the 'Pannonian *passio*', save that *Castorius* has become simply *Castor*. Three of

¹⁰ D. Simonyi, 'Sull'origine del toponimo "Quinque Ecclesiae" di Pécs', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 8 (1960), 165–84, esp. 174–82. Simonyi's identification is endorsed by Guyon, 'Les Quatre Couronnés', pp. 528–30; but note the comments of Peacock ('The *Passio Sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum*: A Petrological Approach', pp. 364–5: 'Geresd Mountain is an unpromising location for Mons Porphyreticus. The low hill is unlikely to have attracted the name "mons", particularly as there are much higher hills not far away to the north of Pécs. The rock is the wrong colour to be called a porphyry. It is too coarse-grained to make the elaborate sculptural pieces referred to in the *passio*'). One should also note that *Sopianae* (Pécs) lay in the Roman province of Valeria in Illyricum, not Pannonia.

¹¹ Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 290.

these names—Nicostratus, Claudius, and Castorius (but not Sympronianus)—figure as names of martyrs in the *passio* of St Sebastian (no. III), composed at Rome by Arnobius the Younger, between c.430 and c.450. In liturgical sources, the feast day of the ‘Four Crowned Martyrs’ becomes fixed on 8 November; thus the ‘Sacramentarium Veronense’ or ‘Leonine Sacramentary’, compiled at Rome during the second half of the sixth century, has on this date the entry, ‘natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum’; the ‘Old Gelasian Sacramentary’, probably compiled at some time in the seventh century, has on the same date, ‘In natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum Costiani Claudi Castori Simproniani’ (where *Costiani* is arguably a corruption of *Nicostrati*); and the Gregorian sacramentaries, also of seventh-century origin, have against 8 November the entry ‘natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum’ (for these liturgical entries, see Appendix V).

With this information in mind, we may return to the ‘Roman *passio*’ (c. 22). There are several noteworthy features of this account. Diocletian is said to have come to Rome from *Sirmium* and to have commissioned a temple of Asclepius to be built of Proconnesian marble in the Baths of Trajan; he is then said to have ordered all soldiers of the urban prefecture to sacrifice at this temple; four high-ranking officers (*cornicularii*) of the prefecture refused to sacrifice, and were accordingly executed by being beaten to death; their bodies were buried in a cemetery at the third mile of the Via Labicana; and, finally, since no one could discover the names of the four officers, Pope Miltiades decreed that they should be known as Claudius, Nicostratus, Sympronianus, and Castorius (i.e. the names of the original four Christian stonemasons from Pannonia) and commemorated on 9 November. It is clear that the author of the ‘Roman *passio*’ derived much of this detail from the ‘Pannonian *passio*’: Diocletian’s interest in the god Asclepius and in sculpture from Proconnesian marble, as well as—significantly—the names of the four martyrs and their feast day on 9 November. One important detail which did not derive from the ‘Pannonian *passio*’, however, is the information that the martyrs were buried in a cemetery on the Via Labicana.

The burial of the ‘Four Crowned Martyrs’ in this cemetery on the Via Labicana is known from the earliest of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, where they are said to be buried in a separate crypt in the same cemetery as SS. Marcellinus and Peter, in the near vicinity of the ‘rotunda’ of St Helena (Appendix IV (a) [§6], p. 661). This information permits identification of the cemetery in question, because the ‘rotunda’ of St Helena is an imposing ruin known today as the Tor Pignattara on the Via Labicana (now the Via Casilina). The cemetery, which is one of the largest suburban cemeteries in Rome, housing as many as 9,000 burials, has long been known as the *Coemeterium inter duas lauros* (‘between the two bay-trees’) and subsequently as that *ad sanctum Marcellinum et Petrum*. In recent times the cemetery has been thoroughly studied, especially by Jean Guyon, with the

result that the crypt of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' has been convincingly identified in 'Region Y' as a double *cubiculum* at the end of a long gallery leading directly from the staircase which descends into the catacombs from the Constantinian basilica (now known only by excavation).¹² The martyrs' double *cubiculum* was identified by means of a fragmentary graffito bearing the legend '+ SCE CLE [...]', that is, '+ SANCTE CLEMENS'.¹³ It will be recalled that the entry concerning these martyrs in the *Depositio martyrum* read 'Clementis Semproniani Clau<di>i Nicostrati in comitatum' (see above)—in other words, that one of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' was, in the earliest recorded reference to them, named Clement. The graffito provides evidence for his veneration in the double *cubiculum*. Furthermore, although the reference to their burial *in comitatum* was formerly thought to refer to a cemetery on an imperial estate at Sirmium,¹⁴ it has recently been argued that *in comitatum* could equally well refer to the cemetery *inter duas lauros*, which was established on what was a huge imperial estate (referred to as *subaugusta*) stretching from the Via Prenestina to the fourth mile of the Via Latina, which belonged at one point to the Empress Helena, and on which Constantine erected the great mausoleum in her honour following her death, aged 80, in 329 (the mausoleum is now the conspicuous ruin known as the Tor Pignattara: see above), which lay adjacent to the basilica of SS. Marcellinus and Peter.¹⁵ In any case, the evidence of the graffito, in combination with the entry in the *Depositio martyrum*, indicates that the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' originally included a martyr named Clement. Furthermore, it is also worth emphasizing that the feast day of these martyrs is given as 9 November in the *Depositio martyrum*, the 'Pannonian *passio*' (c. 20), and the 'Roman *passio*' (c. 22). All

¹² See Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 312–34; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 215–18; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 236–9; Guyon, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers: Recherches sur les catacombes romaines*, esp. pp. 71–8 (Region Y), 130–3 (identification of the crypt of the Four Crowned Martyrs), and 510–12 (Annexe II: Les chambres 54 et 55 et leurs abords (carré A6 du plan): Le sanctuaire des Quatre Couronnés); Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 162–6; and J. Guyon, 'Duas lauros (inter), coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 209–15, with figs. 209–15 [*sic*]. On the Constantinian basilica, as recovered by excavation, see Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 193–206; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 55–60; J. Guyon, 'SS. Marcellini et Petri basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 19–25, with figs. 14–23; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 54–60, with figs. 27–8.

¹³ See Guyon, 'Les Quatre Couronnés', pp. 538–40, with fig. 3 (illustrating the graffito), and *idem*, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*, pp. 130–1, with fig. 85 (illustrating the graffito).

¹⁴ Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 68: 'in comitatum n'est pas une expression topographique romaine; aucun endroit de Rome ou de la banlieue de Rome n'a jamais été désigné sous ce nom. Très probablement il s'agit ici d'une résidence impériale.' The words *in comitatum* in this context would refer to the imperial *comitatus*, 'the group of ministries which were attached to the emperor's person' (Jones, *LRE*, p. 366).

¹⁵ See J. Guyon, 'Comitatum, in', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 133–4, and *idem*, 'Les Quatre Couronnés', pp. 494–5; cf. also *idem*, 'Duas Lauros (inter, ad), territorium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 215–18.

liturgical sources, from the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* and the 'Sacramentarium Veronense' onwards, give the feast day as 8, not 9, November.

The entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*—'Rome, on the Caelian Hill, Sympronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, and Castor'—provides another significant piece of information which is not found anywhere in the *passio* of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs', namely, that they were venerated on the Caelian Hill, where to the present day there is an imposing church dedicated to their memory.¹⁶ The present church of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' is essentially a twelfth-century structure, but it is built over what was a much larger Carolingian basilica dating from the time of Pope Leo IV (847–55).¹⁷ This Carolingian church was in turn built over what appears to have been a seventh-century structure built by Pope Honorius (625–38),¹⁸ which appears to have been the remodelling of a secular basilica dating probably from the fourth century.¹⁹ It is not precisely clear when this secular basilica was adapted for Christian use as a *titulus*-church, but from the sixth century at latest the church was dedicated to the 'Four Crowned Martyrs', for at the synod held under Gregory the Great in 595 it was represented by a priest named Fortunatus *tituli sanctorum quattuor Coronatorum*.²⁰ The fact that this *titulus*-church appears to have supplanted a *titulus Aemiliana*e which was represented by three priests at the Roman synod held a century earlier in 499²¹ suggests that the basilica on the Caelian Hill was originally a *titulus*-church founded by a woman named Aemiliana.²² What is not clear, however, is how this *titulus*-church on the Caelian, which was subsequently dedicated to the 'Four Crowned Martyrs', is related to the crypt of the same four martyrs in the cemetery *inter duas lauros*.²³ At a later time, during the pontificate of Leo IV (847–55), the

¹⁶ See B. Apollonj Ghetti, *I SS. Quattro Coronati* (Rome, 1964); Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 1–36, with pls. I–II; M. G. Barberini, *The Basilica of the Santi Quattro Coronati: The Four Crowned Martyrs in Rome*, trans. L. Lazzari (Rome, 1993); Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 195–6; L. Spera, 'SS. Quattuor Coronati, titulus', *LTUR* IV, pp. 177–8, with figs. 70–1; Diefenbach, *Römische Erinnerungsräume*, pp. 345–8; Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese*, p. 177 with figs. 109–10; and esp. the recent monograph by Lia Barelli, *Il complesso monumentale*.

¹⁷ For the work of Leo IV at SS. Quattro Coronati, see Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 114–15, and Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 32–3.

¹⁸ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 172; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 324; trans. Davis, p. 66: 'Then he built a church to the holy martyrs the Quattuor Coronati; he dedicated it and presented a gift' ('fecit ecclesia [sic] beatorum martyrum quattuor coronatorum, quem [sic] et dedicavit et donum optulit'). Commentators stress the absence of the words *a solo* ('from the ground up') in this description of Honorius' building activities, implying that he remodelled or adapted a pre-existing structure, rather than that he built a wholly new basilica.

¹⁹ Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 27–9.

²⁰ *MGH, Epist.* I, p. 367.

²¹ *MGH, AA* XII, pp. 412, 413, and 414.

²² Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 33–5; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiterali di Roma antica', p. 207; Huelsen, *Le chiese*, pp. 124–5 and 427–8; and L. Spera, 'Aemiliana, titulus', *LTUR* I, p. 20.

²³ Lucrezia Spera (*LTUR* IV, p. 177) resolved the anomaly by stating that the four had been martyred on the Caelian Hill before being buried in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* ('*cornicularii imperiali uccisi sul Celio*'), and cites as her evidence the 'Roman *passio*' (c. 22); but the text makes

remains of the Four Crowned Martyrs were removed from the catacomb on the Via Labicana to the church on the Caelian; but this ninth-century translation will not explain why the church on the Caelian was already dedicated to the Four Crowned Martyrs in the sixth century. The surviving sources simply do not provide enough information to allow us to answer this question.

Text. The *passio* of the 'Four Crowned Martyrs' is listed under two separate numbers in *BHL*, but these are simply two slightly varying recensions of the one text. The first of these (*BHL* 1836) was edited on two occasions by Wilhelm Wattenbach, first in 1870 from a few late medieval manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich,²⁴ and again in 1896, this time from a single witness in Paris, which Wattenbach took to be the earliest surviving manuscript of the text.²⁵ The second, slightly variant recension (*BHL* 1837) was edited by Hippolyte Delehaye in *Acta SS., Novembris* III [1910], pp. 765–79.²⁶ The following translation is based principally on Delehaye's edition in *Acta SS.*, but I have also collated the two editions of Wattenbach; at several points I have incorporated emendations suggested by Michael Petschenig ('Zur Kritik und Würdigung der Passio sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum'). The chapter numbering is that of Delehaye's edition.

1. At the time when Diocletian travelled to Pannonia²⁷ to inspect in person the various stone quarries being dug into the mountains there, it happened that when he called together all the stonemasons, he discovered among them some men endowed with great skill, named Claudius, Castorius, Sympronianus, and Nicostratus, who were marvellous in the technique of stone-carving. These men were secretly Christians, who kept God's commandments, and

no such statement. It states instead that they were executed next to the statue of Asclepius at the temple of that name which Diocletian had built in the Baths of Trajan: i.e. on the Esquiline, not on the Caelian.

²⁴ W. Wattenbach (ed.), 'Passio Sanctorum IV Coronatorum', in *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte*, ed. M. Büdinger (Leipzig, 1870), pp. 321–38. Wattenbach's edition is accompanied by two valuable studies: O. Benndorf, 'Archäologische Bemerkungen', pp. 339–56, and M. Büdinger, 'Chronologische Bemerkungen', pp. 357–79.

²⁵ Wattenbach (1896) (see n. 1), with text at 1292–1302. Wattenbach's edition is based primarily on Paris, BNF, lat. 10861 (Canterbury, s. ix^{1/4}), the earliest surviving witness to the text, with variant readings taken from his earlier (1870) edition given in the *apparatus criticus*.

²⁶ Delehaye's edition is based on collation of twelve MSS., including the early Paris manuscript collated by Wattenbach (Delehaye's A1). Note that this slightly different recension (*BHL* 1837) is also printed by Mombritius (I, pp. 288–92). The differences between the two recensions are trivial; for example, in c. 4, Delehaye's text reads *Creator qui est omnium*, where Wattenbach's text has *Operator qui est omnium*; in c. 6, Delehaye prints *baptismum percipias*, whereas Wattenbach prints *baptismum recipias*; and so on. I have not thought it helpful to record variants of this nature.

²⁷ Diocletian is known to have been in Pannonia in November 285, in January 290 and again during the second half of the year (at *Sirmium*), and in 291, 293 and 294; see Barnes, *The New Empire*, pp. 50–6. On the basis of the present *passio* (c. 21), Barnes records a visit by Diocletian to *Sirmium* in summer and autumn 303 (*ibid.* p. 56 with n. 42). (As far as I can ascertain, this is the only occasion on which Barnes admits the evidence of the *passio* of a Roman martyr.)

whatever they produced in their sculpture, they carved in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It happened one day that, at the command of Diocletian, the stonemasons were (ordered) to carve a likeness of the sun with his chariot from Thasian marble²⁸—the chariot, the horses, everything—from a single block of stone. At the same time all the stonemasons, together with the engineers,²⁹ began to consider how to interpret an instruction of this kind. And when they had cut into a large block of the Thasian marble, their technique was found to be inadequate for the sculpture commanded by Diocletian the Augustus, and for many days there was an argument between the stonemasons and the engineers.

2. One day the 622 stonemasons met with the five engineers at a particular source, and they began to explore the seams of stone, and there was an exceptional argument between the stonemasons and the engineers. At that point Sympronianus, trusting in the faith to which he adhered, said to his co-workers: 'I ask you all to give me your trust, and I, together with my apprentices Claudius, Simplicius, Nicostratus, and Castorius, will find (a suitable seam).' And, inspecting a seam in the stone, he began in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to carve a shape, and the carving went well, and the sculpture was completed according to the command of the Augustus—a statue of the sun some twenty-five feet (high).

3. This was reported to Diocletian the Augustus and he was delighted. At that same time he ordered a temple (of the sun) to be built there at the place called Mt Fertile (*Mons Pinguis*).³⁰ And there he placed and set up the statue, and gilded it. And he began to offer sacrifices³¹ with unguents and incense, and he presented great gifts to the stonemasons. At the same time, overcome with great admiration, he ordered that columns, or rather capitals for the columns, be carved by the masons from porphyry.³² And he summoned to

²⁸ On Thasian marble (from Thasos), which, after Parian marble (from Paros) was the most important Greek marble, see R. Gnoli, *Marmora Romana* (Rome, 1988), pp. 262–3, and also (briefly) Claridge, *Rome*, p. 39. The marble here being quarried in Pannonia would more accurately be described as 'Thasian-type' marble.

²⁹ The Latin word used here is *philosophi*; I follow Delehaye (*Les Passions des martyrs*, p. 236) and Berschin (*Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, p. 67) in translating *philosophi* as 'engineers'; they could also be described as 'designers'.

³⁰ The name *Mons Pinguis* ('Mt Fertile') is clearly intended to suggest (what the author understood to be) *Mons Almus* ('Mt Bountiful'); but note that the Latin name for the mountainous area subsequently known as the Fruška Gora was *Alma Mons* (apparently preserving the unexplained name *Alma*), not *Mons Almus*: see n. 6. The author of the *passio* misunderstood *Alma* as *Almus*; hence his allusion to 'Mt Fertile'. Note that J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (London, 1990), p. 70, likewise refers to *Mons Almus*, but the grammatical correction of *Alma Mons* is unjustified.

³¹ Reading *litari* (an emendation suggested by Benndorf) for transmitted *laetari/laetare* (printed by Wattenbach (1870) (see n. 24), Wattenbach (1896) (see n. 1), and Delehaye, *Acta SS.*).

³² There were many different kinds and colours of porphyry (e.g. green porphyry, quarried principally in Egypt, black porphyry, red porphyry, etc.); see Gnoli, *Marmora Romana*, pp. 122–44. The only place in Pannonia where porphyry of any kind occurs is in Fruška Gora.

him Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius; receiving them warmly he said to them: 'I wish you, with the skill of your technique, to carve capitals for the columns out of porphyry.'

4. And following this command, they departed, together with a multitude of stonemasons and engineers. And coming to the hill which is called Red Hill (*Mons Igneus*) in the porphyry mountain-range (*mons porphyreticus*),³³ they began to cut the stone in forty-foot blocks. Claudius did all this work in the name of Jesus Christ. And his skill was with him. But for Simplicius, who was a pagan, everything that he did was not suitable. One day Nicostratus said to Simplicius: 'Brother, how is it that your iron tool is broken?' Simplicius said: 'I beg you, temper it so it won't break.' And Claudius said, 'Hand me your tool.' And when he had given him his iron stoneworking tool, Claudius said: 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, let this too be strong and sound for the work to be done.' And from that hour forth, Simplicius began to practise well and accurately the stonecutter's art with his iron tools, just like Sympronianus. Then Simplicius began with great affection and enthusiasm to ask of Sympronianus what kind of tempering he used, because the iron blade³⁴ of his tool never broke—which previously was not the case. Sympronianus, together with Claudius, said to him: 'Do you therefore, brother, (find something to) admire in the temperament of our iron tools? He, Who is the Creator of all things, takes care of His creation.' Simplicius replied to Sympronianus: 'Surely the god Jupiter did not do all these things?' Claudius replied: 'Brother, repent, because you have blasphemed, being unaware of what you say. The God Whom we confess, He made all things, and his Son, Jesus Christ, is our Lord, and the Holy Spirit. But him whom you call god—do you not recognize that he is carved by our hands? Are you unaware that (even) the sun, whom we made with the technique of our sculpture—that he himself is nothing?'

5. That same day, while they were debating, Diocletian the Augustus ordered that conchs adorned with patterns be carved out of porphyry. Then Sympronianus, Claudius, Castorius, (and) Nicostratus began, with the great subtlety of their technique, to carve conchs and basins with cantharus patterns.

6. But (as for) Simplicius: everything he set out to produce broke in his hand. Then he said to Sympronianus: 'I entreat you by the sun god, that you explain to me who is this God Who created all things, in Whose name you

³³ The name of the highest peak in Fruška Gora is Črveni Čot ('Red Hill', cf. Latin *collis rubeus*), near to Kipovno (see Bulić, 'Qualche cosa proviene', pp. 120–1); Delehaye comments, 'In Kipovno certe lapis rubri coloris, unde mons igneus dictus sit, reperitur' (p. 767). In other words, 'Red Hill' was a place in the Fruška Gora where reddish-tinted porphyry could be quarried.

³⁴ Reading *acumenta* (Petschenig's suggested emendation) for *argumenta*, as printed by Wattenbach (1870) (see n. 24), Wattenbach (1896) (see n. 1), and Delehaye (*Acta SS.*).

practise your art so well.' In reply Claudius said to Simplicius: 'Are the things which we make pleasing to your perception and to the sight of your eyes?' Simplicius replied and said: 'I observe some kind of prayer which you pray secretly. Tell me this prayer to your God, so that with you I may enjoy His favour.' Claudius says to him: 'And is your friendship (for us) pure?' Simplicius replies: 'Truly pure. For, (as) you know, for fifteen years, behold, I have worked alongside you.' Sympronianus says to him: 'If you can believe, we shall explain it to you, and if you accept this knowledge, you will have eternal life.' Simplicius replies: 'I desire with all my heart to know your God, and I beg you (to reveal Him to me).' Claudius says to him: 'Behold, this is what we say in all honesty: that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that you undergo baptism, and all things will be provided for you.' Simplicius replies: 'Therefore do not delay, that I be one with you in understanding and in religion.' And they began to seek out a bishop. And they found a bishop consigned to custody in prison named Cyrillus, brought there from Antioch³⁵ and imprisoned for the name of Christ,³⁶ who for three years had undergone the punishment of repeated beatings. Coming to him by night, Sympronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, and Castorius, together with Simplicius, found him bound up in chains with many other confessors. And approaching the holy Cyrillus, they threw themselves at his feet, and asked that he baptize Simplicius. When he heard this, the blessed Cyrillus, filled with joy, said to Simplicius: 'My son, see to it that you believe with all your heart, and all things will be provided for you.'

7. And in reply Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, and Castorius told St Cyrillus what had happened in respect of the iron stonecutting tools. And then St Cyrillus, giving thanks to Almighty God, said to Simplicius: 'You see, my son, the power which is (potentially) present in your work: now you must simply have faith.' Simplicius replied and said with tears (in his eyes), 'And how do you require me to show my faith?' St Cyrillus said: 'That you believe in Christ, the creator of all things, and reject all images made by hand.' Simplicius replied: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is truly the true God.' And thereupon, in accordance with custom, he baptized him in the prison in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost, and he dismissed them, and they returned to their work.

8. And they began to carve the conchs from porphyrian marble, with acanthus patterns. And the very same hour in which they put their hands to the task, they were working in the name of Jesus Christ (by making) the sign of the Cross. One of the engineers, observing and seeing how without the sign

³⁵ Cyrillus is a historically-attested bishop of Antioch (from 279 until his martyrdom in 303): see Eusebius, *HE* vii. 32. 2, and Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, II, p. 682.

³⁶ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were brought to trial: see Introduction, pp. 12–13.

of the Cross they accomplished nothing, but that they employed the sign of the Cross all the time in their work, was profoundly saddened and said, filled with anger: 'This is a kind of magic art, because this kind of sign pertains to (Christian) belief,³⁷ and through it all your satisfactory achievements are accomplished.' Claudius replied and said: 'Do you not know, engineer, that this sign, which pertains to our belief, leads to eternal life for him who believes in it?' The engineer replied: 'Belief in death cannot lead to (eternal) life, but only through temporal existence³⁸ can one experience life.' Claudius replied and said: 'God, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, said, "Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life (for My sake) will find it".'³⁹ The engineer replied: 'Do you therefore follow Christ by worshipping Him?' Claudius replied: 'Truly we do all the works of our hands through His power (and) the sign of the Cross, because the "teacher of peoples", Paul the apostle, said: "Whatever you do, do in the name of the Lord".'⁴⁰ The engineer said: 'In the name of what Lord?' Sympronianus said: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The engineer said, 'And if He is God or the Lord, how was He subject to death?' Sympronianus said: 'Well do you state that He "was subject to death"; but if you know that He died, are you unaware that He rose up (from the dead)?'

9. While they were debating in this way, many of the stonemasons believed in the words and teaching of the blessed Sympronianus. And they said to each other: 'It is better for us that we be assisted by this knowledge, and we can be strong in the name of Him Who died and was resurrected.'

10. At that same time, the porphyry conchs were completed to Diocletian's specifications, with fruit and acanthus patterns, by the handiwork of Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, and Castorius. And they were presented for the inspection of Diocletian the Augustus. And all (the conchs) were pleasing to him, and he increased his gifts to Sympronianus, Claudius, Castorius, and

³⁷ Reading *credulitatem* for *crudelitatem*, as printed by Wattenbach (1870) (see n. 24), Wattenbach (1896) (see n. 1), and Delehaye (*Acta SS.*). The same error of transmission occurs twice more in the following two sentences, and is translated as 'belief' (*credulitas*) on both occasions.

³⁸ Reading *existentiam* for the transmitted *abstinentiam*, as printed by Wattenbach (1870) (see n. 24), Wattenbach (1896) (see n. 1), and Delehaye (*Acta SS.*).

³⁹ Matth. 10: 39.

⁴⁰ Cf. I Cor. 10: 31. The Vulgate version of this verse reads 'omnia in gloria Dei facite', whereas the present text has the reading 'omnia in nomine Domini facite'. The variant *in nomine Domini* for *in gloria Dei* is attested in several Vetus Latina versions quoted by patristic authors, such as Aponius, *In Canticum Canticorum expositio* [CPL 194], ii. 5 ('omnia in nomine Domini facite'), Gaudentius, *Tractatus xxi* [CPL 215], viii. 18 ('omnia in nomine Domini Iesu Christi <facite>'), Jerome, *Comm. in Ecclesiasten* [CPL 583], ix. 7, 8 ('omnia in nomine Domini facite'), and Jerome, *Tractatus in Marci Euangelium* [CPL 594], vii ('omnia in nomine Domini facite'). These quotations indicate that the author of the *passio* was familiar with a Vetus Latina version of I Corinthians.

Nicostratus. Then Diocletian said: 'I wish for columns with leaf-shaped capitals to be carved from porphyrian marble to the specifications of Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, and Castorius.'

11. On hearing this the engineers were violently indignant (at what) the command of Diocletian required. Proceeding to the quarry, they [Sympronianus, Claudius, Castorius, and Nicostratus] designated the part of the stone which was to be carved. Then they prayed and made the sign of the Cross. And discussing and (then) cutting with their pickaxes, these stonemasons cut into the stone for the shaft of the column. And they worked daily for three months.

12. When one column had been finished with superb technique, the engineers said to Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius: 'You who have been enriched with gifts, devote your effort to cutting other columns. Why do you wish to learn the pattern from us?' The five (stonemasons) said in reply: 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom we trust, we will carve another column just like the first.' And applying themselves with great enthusiasm, they carved another column in twenty-six days. Then the engineers said indignantly: 'The spells are nothing if not magical arts.' Thus they [the stonemasons] applied their industry to sculpting works of various shapes, and their technique was appropriate to their (own) design: they made nothing according to the plans of the engineers, but worked daily in the name of Christ. Seeing this, the engineers made a suggestion to Diocletian the Augustus, saying: 'Mighty emperor, decorator of the world, great is the wisdom of your command and clemency with respect to the work at the designated quarry, that the precious stone be carved into wondrous adornment for your empire, and much distinguished work has been done in the carving of columns and the wonderful effort of your serene majesty.' Diocletian the Augustus said: 'Truly I admire the skill of these men.' And he commanded all five of them to be brought into his presence. He said to them cheerfully: 'Through the agency of the gods, (and) because I shall enhance you with riches and gifts, carve out some figures from this porphyrian marble.' And he ordered Victories and Cupids and conchs once again, and most of all an Asclepius, to be sculpted.

13. And they made conchs, Victories, and Cupids, and they did not make an image of Asclepius. And after some days they handed over their handiwork in various shapes and patterns. Diocletian was similarly delighted with the skill of their stone-carving, and Diocletian, the Augustus, said to Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius: 'I rejoice in the application of your skill. However, why do you not show your affection by carving the Asclepius, god of all healing? Depart in peace and devote your efforts to this statue, and also produce lions spouting water, and eagles, and stags, and likenesses of many peoples.' And that very hour they worked as was their custom, and produced everything except the statue of Asclepius. But after four months the engineers suggested to Diocletian the Augustus that he should inspect the works of the stonemasons, and he ordered that all these (works) be

brought out into the open. And when these were brought out, an Asclepius, (made) in accordance with the orders of Diocletian, was not presented.

14. And when he enquired after it with great concern, the engineers made another suggestion, saying: 'Most reverend Emperor, always august, who love all men and are the friend of peace, your merciful self should know that these men whom you love are Christians, and whatever is asked of them they do in the name of Christ.' Diocletian the Augustus replied, saying: 'If all their works (done) in the name of Christ are recognized as magnificent, this is not something unfeeling but rather is honourable.' The engineers replied, saying: 'You are unaware, most kindly emperor, that with their unfeeling conscience they do not obey the commands of your merciful self, and therefore they do not wish to reveal the richness of their talent in the production of a statue of Asclepius.' Diocletian replied, saying: 'Let these men be brought before me.'

15. And when Claudius, Sympronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus, and Simplicius had been summoned, Diocletian said to them: 'You are aware of the great affection and honour with which my clemency values you, and that I cherish you with devout affection. Why do you not obey my commands (and) carve a god Asclepius from porphyry marble?' Claudius replied: 'Merciful Augustus, we have always obeyed your devout (commands) and complied with your renowned authority; but we shall never make a statue of a wretched man, because it is written: "Those who do such things become like them, and all those who trust in them".'⁴¹ Then the engineers became inflamed against them, saying to Diocletian: 'Most merciful Augustus, do you not see this perfidy, how they reply to your merciful self with arrogant speech?' Diocletian the Augustus said: 'Let these skilful artisans not be cursed, but rather be cherished.' The engineers said: 'Therefore let them obey the commands of your merciful majesty, and we shall discover those who work in accordance with your wishes.' Diocletian the Augustus said: 'Can more skilful exponents of this technique be found?' The engineers said: 'We shall provide men who are practitioners of our (own) religion.' Diocletian said: 'If you can arrange it that they produce a (statue of the) god Asclepius, both shall I charge these (present stonemasons) with the penalty of sacrilege, and those (newly-found stonemasons) shall loom large in our magnanimity.'

16. Then the engineers began to engage in argument with Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius: 'Why do you not obey the commands of the merciful Augustus Diocletian with your stone-carving, and do what he wishes?' Claudius said: 'We do not blaspheme Our Creator, and do not endanger ourselves, so that we are found guilty in His sight.' The engineers said: 'It's obvious that you are Christians.' Castorius said: 'We truly are Christians.'

⁴¹ Ps. 134: 18.

Then the engineers selected other stonemasons, and made them sculpt from Proconnesian marble.⁴² And after thirty-one days they placed (their handiwork) before the engineers. The engineers announced to Diocletian that the Asclepius was completed. And Diocletian ordered that it be brought into his presence.

17. And when he had looked over the statue, he admired it, and said: 'Is the ingenuity of this technique that of those whose carving technique (previously) pleased me?' The engineers said: 'Most sacred emperor, eternal Augustus, let your clemency know that those whom your serene majesty declares to be most skilled in stone-carving, that is, Claudius, Sympronianus, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius, are sacrilegious Christians, and through the incantation of their spells all the human race is humiliated before them.' Diocletian the Augustus said: 'If they will not obey the commands of justice, and the import of your insinuations is true, let them suffer the sentence for sacrilege.' And he gave orders to a certain tribune named Lampadius, that they be investigated, together with the engineers, by means of verbal interrogation, saying: 'Investigate them by means of a thorough examination, and if any trace of false testimony is found, let them be punished with the penalty for (their) guilt.' At that same time Lampadius the tribune ordered the trial to be staged before the temple of the Sun, and all the stonemasons to be summoned, together with Sympronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, Castorius, and Simplicius, as well as the engineers; to all of them Lampadius said publicly, in a clear voice: 'Our lords, the gracious emperors, said by way of giving instructions, that, through the truth (to be) established by us, it should become clear if the accusation arising between both parties—the engineers and the master carvers Claudius, Sympronianus, Castorius, Nicostratus, and Simplicius—be true.' All the stonemasons, spitefully prompted by the engineers, shouted out: 'For the salvation of the merciful Caesar, take away the wicked ones, take away the sorcerers!'⁴³

18. Lampadius the tribune, seeing that the stonemasons were shouting out spitefully, said: 'The matter has not thus far been decided: how can I pass judgement?' The engineers said: 'If they are not sorcerers, let them worship the

⁴² On Proconnesian marble, which was quarried in Asia Minor at Proconnesus (today Marmara in Turkey), see Gnoli, *Marmora Romana* (see n. 28), pp. 263–4 with fig. 15, and (briefly), Claridge, *Rome*, p. 39. The marble here being quarried in Pannonia would more accurately be described as 'Proconnesian-type' marble.

⁴³ As Berschin (*Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, pp. 70–1) pointed out, the trial conducted by Lampadius, and the shouts of the engineers and (pagan) stone-carvers against the Christians—'Clamaverunt omnes artifices quadratarii invidiose moniti a philosophis, "Per salutem piissimi Caesaris, tolle sacrilegos, tolle magos!"'—are based on the gospel story of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate, and the shouts of the Jews: John 18: 40 ('clamaverunt ergo rursum omnes dicentes...'), Matt. 27: 18 ('sciebat enim [Pilatus] quod per invidiam tradidissent eum'), and John 19: 15 ('tolle, tolle hunc, crucifige eum').

god of Caesar.’ Straightway Lampadius the tribune issued the command to Sympronianus, Claudius, Castorius, Nicostratus, and Simplicius: ‘Worship the Sun god, in order that you may refute the allegations of the engineers.’ They said in reply: ‘We have never worshipped the product of our own hands, but we worship the Lord of heaven and earth, Who is the perpetual emperor and eternal God, Lord Jesus Christ.’ The engineers said: ‘Behold, you have established the truth, report it to Caesar.’ Then Lampadius ordered them to be consigned to the public prison. After nine days, having arranged a meeting, he reported what had happened to Diocletian the Augustus. The same day the engineers accused them spitefully, saying to the emperor: ‘If these (men) go free, all respect for the gods will perish.’ In a rage Diocletian the Augustus said: ‘By the great Sun god, if they will not sacrifice to the Sun god in accordance with ancient custom, and will not heed our warnings, I shall destroy them with various choice tortures.’

19. At once, Lampadius the tribune commanded that they assemble another day before the temple of the Sun. And Lampadius the tribune said: ‘Let both parties be brought in, both the engineers and the stonemasons.’ And when they had been brought in, Lampadius the tribune said: ‘Let the accusers come forward, and let them say what their allegation is.’ As the engineers came in, Chrysolitus the engineer said to Lampadius the tribune: ‘(You see) what your intelligence suspected—why do you seek to know more?’ Lampadius the tribune said to Claudius, Nicostratus, Sympronianus, Castorius, and Simplicius: ‘Is what our gracious emperors commanded known to you?’ The five of them said: ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them: ‘That you sacrifice to the Sun god and show reverence to the ancestral divinities.’ Claudius replied: ‘We show reverence to God Almighty and to Jesus Christ, His Son, in Whose name we have always placed our hope, and we trust that after the shadows (we will) come to the light.’ Lampadius said: ‘And what light is clearer than that of the Sun god?’ Claudius replied: ‘Christ, Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, Who illuminates the sun and the moon and all human beings that come into this world. He is the true light, where there are no shadows.’ Lampadius the tribune said: ‘I ask and warn you, do not lose the great love and respect of Diocletian the emperor. For you well know that the merciful emperor is so well disposed to all men that he loves them all with such great affection as his brothers and sons, and most of all (those who are) worshippers of the gods.’ Sympronianus together with his companions said: ‘The merciful emperor should only have care for men in order not to offend God in heaven, Who is the Creator of all things. We are concerned that we not perish in a future age, where the fire is not extinguished.’ Lampadius the tribune, considering the orders of Diocletian, reported to Diocletian what had happened. Then Diocletian, reflecting on their skill, issued an order to Lampadius the tribune, saying: ‘If they will not now consent and sacrifice to

the Sun god, punish them with beatings and scorpion-whips;⁴⁴ but if they consent, bring them to my clemency.'

20. But after five days, he [Lampadius] sat again in the same tribunal before the temple of the Sun, and through the herald's proclamation ordered them to be brought in, and terrifying instruments of torture to be shown to them. He spoke to them, saying: 'Listen to me and avoid torture, and be dear friends of our noble emperors, and sacrifice to the Sun god. For it is no longer a matter of speaking to you with gentle words.' Claudius replied, together with his companions, saying with great assurance: 'We do not fear the terrors, nor are we broken down by blandishments; but rather we fear the eternal punishments. Let Diocletian the Augustus realize that we are worshippers of Christ and will never abandon our worship of Him.' Then Lampadius the tribune ordered them to be stripped and whipped with scorpion-whips, saying through the proclamation of the herald: 'Do not scorn the orders of the emperors!' In that same hour, Lampadius was seized by a demon, and, tearing himself (to pieces), expired while sitting on his tribunal. Hearing of this, his wife and family ran to the engineers with great lamentation, asking that this be revealed to Diocletian. When Diocletian heard this, he was violently angered and, filled with rage, said: 'Let them be shut up alive in lead caskets, and thrown into the river.' Then Nicetius, a certain senator who was sitting (on the tribunal) with Lampadius, implemented the orders of Diocletian, and had lead caskets made, and enclosed them all still alive (in the caskets), and ordered them to be thrown into the river.⁴⁵ Bishop Cyrillus, hearing of this in his prison cell, threw himself down and passed to God. They all suffered martyrdom on 9 November.

21. In these days Diocletian travelled from there to *Sirmium*.⁴⁶ But after forty-two days a certain Nicodemus, a Christian, raised up the caskets with the (martyrs') bodies, and placed them in his house.

⁴⁴ On the nature of a 'scorpion-whip' (*scorpio*), see no. XVI (p. 339, n. 90).

⁴⁵ The description of the trial and execution is confused. Diocletian has given clear instructions to Lampadius, a military tribune, simply to torture the Four (in fact Five) Crowned Martyrs. What, then, is Lampadius doing sitting in tribunal conducting a trial, being assisted by a senator (Nicetius), who is apparently acting as legal *assessor* to Lampadius? Only the emperor and his delegated deputies—the urban prefect and the praetorian prefect and their deputies, and, subsequently (after 331), provincial governors of whatever rank, as well as *comites*—had the authority to try capital cases and to pass the death sentence (cf. Garnsey, 'The Criminal Jurisdiction of Governors', and esp. Peachin, *Iudex vice Caesaris*, pp. 191–4). A lowly military tribune did not have such authority; and in any event his tribunal is superfluous, given Diocletian's involvement in the case. Note also that the means of execution—drowning and suffocation by being enclosed in lead caskets and submerged in a river—is unparalleled elsewhere in the *passiones* of Roman martyrs and in Roman legal texts.

⁴⁶ *Sirmium* was located on the river Sava in Pannonia, and was the site of an imperial residence, mint, and arms factory; it corresponds to the town of Sremska Mitrovica in present-day Serbia. See *Sirmium. Archaeological Investigations in Sirmian Pannonia*, ed. V. Popović and E. L. Ochsenchlagel, 4 vols. (Belgrade, 1971—[in progress]), esp. M. Mirković, 'Sirmium—Its

22. Diocletian, coming from *Sirmium* after eleven months, entered Rome.⁴⁷ And he immediately ordered a temple of Asclepius to be built in the Baths of Trajan,⁴⁸ and a statue to be made out of Proconnesian marble.⁴⁹ When this had been done, he ordered that all the healings which took place in this same temple be recorded in lettering on brass plaques; and he ordered that all those soldiers coming to the statue of Asclepius should be compelled to sacrifice there with incense, most of all the soldiers of the urban prefecture. And when everyone had been thus compelled to sacrifice, four high-ranking officials of the prefecture (*cornicularii*)⁵⁰ were compelled to sacrifice. As they were hesitating to do so, this was announced to Diocletian the Augustus. He ordered that they be beaten to death with lead-weighted whips in front of the statue itself. When they were beaten, they gave up the ghost. He ordered that their bodies be cast out into the street for the dogs; the bodies lay there for five days. Then the blessed Sebastian,⁵¹ together with

History from the I. Century to AD 582', I, pp. 5–90, esp. 36–41 (Sirmium as military and administrative centre), and V. Popović, 'A Survey of the Topography and Urban Organization of Sirmium in the Late Empire', I, pp. 119–33, esp. 125–6 on the site of the imperial palace. See also E. L. Ochsenschlager and V. Popović, 'Excavations at Sirmium, Yugoslavia', *Archaeology* 26 (1973), 85–93 (with illustrations of the 1969 excavations of the imperial palace), and D. Bosković, N. Duval, P. Gros, and V. Popović, 'Recherches archéologiques à Sirmium. Campagne Franco-Yougoslave de 1973', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 86 (1974), 597–656, with discussion of the imperial palace at pp. 616–19.

⁴⁷ In fact, Diocletian very rarely visited Rome; the only visit which can be in question here is on the occasion of his *vicennalia*, when he spent a couple of months in Rome in November and December, AD 303 (see Barnes, *The New Empire*, p. 56). On the basis of the present *passio*, Barnes conjectures that Diocletian did indeed travel to Rome from *Sirmium* on this occasion.

⁴⁸ On the Baths of Trajan, see Platner–Ashby, pp. 534–6; Richardson, pp. 397–8; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 288–90; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 186–90 with figs. 51–2; and G. Caruso and R. Volpe, 'Thermae Traiani', *LTUR* V, pp. 67–9 with figs. 42–4. No temple of Aesculapius (Asclepius) has been identified in the bath complex. The only known temple of Aesculapius in Rome was located on the Tiber Island (*Insula Tiberina*); see Richardson, pp. 3–4, with fig. 37 (no. 26), and D. Degrassi, 'Aesculapius, Aedes, Templum (Insula Tiberina)', *LTUR* I, pp. 21–2. However, on the basis of the present *passio*, it has been conjectured that there was also a temple of Asclepius on the Esquiline, built by Diocletian on the site of the Baths of Trajan, and this conjecture appears to be supported by the discovery in the near vicinity of an inscription (in Greek) offered by the physician Nicomedes to the god Asclepius; see D. Degrassi, 'Aesculapius, Aedes (Mons Cispinus)', *LTUR* I, pp. 22–3. No trace of this temple has ever been found, but it was arguably located near to the present-day church of S. Martino ai Monti.

⁴⁹ On Proconnesian marble, see n. 42.

⁵⁰ The *cornicularius* was, after the *princeps officii*, the second-highest-ranking official on the staff of the prefecture, with special responsibility for judicial matters; see Sinnigen, *The Officium of the Urban Prefecture*, pp. 33–8; Jones, *LRE*, pp. 497, 544, 563–6, and 587–93; and C. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, pp. 89, 91, and 93.

⁵¹ The chronology here is impossible: St Sebastian had been martyred—at least according to the *passio* in his name (III.88)—during the 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian, a number of years before Miltiades became pope. There is nevertheless some connection between the present chapter and the *passio* of St Sebastian, in which the names of three of the Four Crowned Martyrs figure as martyrs: Claudius (III.29, 32–6, 68, 75), Nicostratus (III.24–5, 29–30, 32–5, 68, 75), and Castorius, the brother of Nicostratus (III.35, 68, 75). Two of these men held high-ranking

Bishop Miltiades,⁵² recovered the bodies and buried them with other saints in a catacomb (*arenarium*) on the Via Labicana, at the third mile.⁵³ At that time, but after two years, on 9 November, since they could not discover their names, the blessed Bishop Miltiades ordered that their feast day be celebrated under the names of Claudius, Nicostratus, Sympronianus, and Castorius.⁵⁴

A censor's secretary named Porphyry recorded this event.⁵⁵

positions in the office of the prefecture, though neither was a *cornicularius*: Claudius was a *commentariensis*, Nicostratus a *primiscrinus*.

⁵² Miltiades was pope from 310 to 314; see *DACL* XI/1, cols. 1199–1203 [H. Leclercq]; Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 160–7; and *EP* I, pp. 317–21 [A. Di Berardino]. Diocletian had abdicated in 305 and was not resident in Rome during the papacy of Miltiades.

⁵³ The cemetery at the third mile of the Via Labicana, in which the Four Crowned Martyrs were buried, is that known as the *Coemeterium inter duas lauros* (*ad sanctum Marcellinum et Petrum*), on which see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 312–34; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 236–9; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 162–6; and esp. Guyon, *Le cimetière aux deux lauriers*. The sanctuary of the Four Crowned Martyrs is identified as a double *cubiculum* in region Y of the catacomb: see n. 12.

⁵⁴ The date 9 November given here, both in the 'Pannonian *passio*' (c. 20) and the 'Roman *passio*' (c. 22), is also that given in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 636); whereas in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 657) and in the early mass-books (Appendix V) the date is given as 8 November. It is difficult to know how much significance to attach to the disparity, which could simply be due to the misreading of a Roman numeral at some stage of the transmission; or possibly 8 November was the date fixed for commemoration at the church of SS. Quattro Coronati on the Caelian. The difficulties—which are probably insoluble—are helpfully canvassed by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 122–3.

⁵⁵ Berschin plausibly suggests that the name 'Porphyry' has been fabricated from the numerous mentions of porphyry in the preceding text (*Biographie und Epochenstil*, I, p. 67, n. 74).

XXV

St Pancratius

c.600; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of St Pancratius (Via Aurelia)

This brief *passio* relates the martyrdom of a Phrygian boy who, at the time of the ‘Great Persecution’, travelled to Rome where, because of his Christian belief, he was brought to the attention of Diocletian, was interrogated, and then executed and buried in a cemetery on the Via Aurelia.¹ Although the story is simple enough, the transmission of the text itself is immensely complex, and needs to be addressed before any analysis of the content is possible.

There are some eight early versions of a *passio* of St Pancratius (*BHL* 6420–7), but it cannot be demonstrated that any one of them is the source of others—none of them, in a word, can be thought to represent the original. Whether a full study of the numerous surviving manuscripts will eventually throw any light on the matter remains to be seen. In the meantime, four printed texts which represent separate redactions help to illuminate the (hypothetical) original. For convenience I refer to these as follows:

Redaction A: BHL 6426 (ed. Mombricitus II, p. 342)

Redaction B: BHL 6421 (ed. *Acta SS., Maii* III [1680], p. 21)

Redaction C: BHL 6427 (ed. *AB* 2 (1883), 289–91)

Redaction D: BHL 6420 (ed. *AB* 10 (1891), 53–6; repr. *DACL* XIII/1, cols. 1005–7)

Redaction A (*BHL* 6426) is not preserved in a single medieval manuscript; it is known solely because it was printed by Mombricitus in 1480. In *Redaction A*, we are told that, at the time of the Great Persecution under Diocletian and Maximian, two aristocrats in the city of Phrygia, named Cledon and Cyrias (his wife), had a son named Pancratius. After the death of the mother, the

¹ Listed *BHL* 6420–7 (for four of these versions—*BHL* 6420, 6421, 6426, and 6427—see below) and *CPL* 2215; discussed by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 235–7; Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘Della leggenda di S. Pancrazio’, pp. 75–120; *DACL* XIII/1, cols. 1001–14 [H. Leclercq]; Kirsch, ‘Le memorie dei martiri’, pp. 63–71; *BSS* X, cols. 82–6 [A. Rimoldi]; Verrando, ‘Le numerose recensioni della *Passio Pancratii*’, pp. 105–29; Declerck, ‘Les recensions grecques de la Passion de S. Pancrace’; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 289–90; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 253–5.

father entrusted the boy to his brother Dionysius, instructing him to look after his son and not to let any fortune-hunter get his hands on their substantial estate. (The father then apparently died, although the text does not say so.) After three years Dionysius and Pancratius travelled to Rome, and took up residence in an apartment block (*insula caminiana*) on the Caelian Hill.² Meanwhile, Pope Cornelius was in hiding in the same neighbourhood. Dionysius and Pancratius decided to visit the pope. They arrived at his residence; the doorman Eusebius reported their arrival to Cornelius, and they were welcomed in; after twenty days he baptized them. A few days later Dionysius died. Pancratius was subsequently denounced and arrested. Because he was of aristocratic birth he was taken to Diocletian. Diocletian and Pancratius entered into discussion about the merits of Christian belief, the result of which was that Pancratius was taken to the Via Aurelia and decapitated.

Redaction B (BHL 6421), unlike *Redaction A*, circulated fairly widely in manuscript: *BHLms* lists fifty-four manuscripts, and no doubt more could be found (for example, in libraries in Florence).³ In *Redaction B*, the story similarly begins in Phrygia; but this time Cleonius [*sic*] and his wife Cyrias are said to be residents of the city of Synnada in Phrygia. Similar arrangements are made for Pancratius and his estate. After his father's death, he and his uncle Dionysius come to Rome and take up residence in an apartment block (*insula Cuminiana*) on the Caelian Hill. In *Redaction B*, however, the pope who is hiding from persecution is named Gaius; as in *Redaction A*, Dionysius and Pancratius are baptized; Dionysius dies; and Pancratius comes to the notice of Diocletian. Discussion with Diocletian leads to the execution of Pancratius on the Via Aurelia; but his body is recovered at night by a devout Christian named Octavilla, and fittingly buried. We are told that Pancratius was martyred on 12 May in AD 304; on that same date a noble virgin named Soteris was also martyred.

Redaction C (BHL 6427) also circulated in a fair number of manuscripts: *BHLms* lists twenty-seven witnesses, and Franchi de'Cavalieri noted several others not listed by the Bollandists: two in manuscripts in Cambrai and Troyes, and six others in libraries in Florence.⁴ In *Redaction C*, the narrative is situated during the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus. Cledonius and his son Pancratius are said to be residents of the city of Synnada in Phrygia (there

² On the possible location of this *insula caminiana*, see Verrando, 'Le numerose recensioni della *Passio Pancratii*', p. 120; Richardson, p. 209; and G. De Spirito, 'Insula Cuminiana', *LTUR* III, p. 97. For the etymology of the adjectival form *caminianus*, see n. 18.

³ Note that Rossana Guglielmetti (*I testi agiografici latini nei codici della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* (Florence, 2007), p. 888) lists fifteen manuscripts of BHL 6421 in the Laurenziana alone.

⁴ 'Della leggenda di S. Pancrazio', p. 92, nn. 2–4. The text printed by the Bollandists in *AB* 2 (1883), 289–91, is transcribed from a single manuscript, a twelfth-century legendary now in Namur, Bibliothèque de la Ville, 53 (Saint-Hubert, s. xii).

is no mention of a wife named Cyrias or Cyriaca); after the death of Cledonius, Dionysius, the uncle of Pancratius, decides to take Pancratius with him to Rome, where they find lodging in an apartment block (*insula caminiana*) on the Caelian Hill, the same district in which Cornelius, the pope of Rome, was also in hiding. After coming into contact with the pope, Pancratius and Dionysius are baptized, and Dionysius dies shortly afterwards. Pancratius comes to the notice of the emperor Valerian and, after private audience with the emperor, he is sentenced to death and is taken to the Via Aurelia and executed there; a lady of senatorial rank (*senatrix*) named Octavilla recovers his body and commits it to decent burial. *Redaction C* concludes by stating that Pancratius was martyred under Valerian and Gallienus (no mention is made of a virgin named Soteris).

Redaction D (BHL 6420) is preserved in fifteen manuscripts listed in *BHLms*, many fewer than either *Redaction B* or *Redaction C*. *Redaction D* tells a substantially different story. Clemonius and his wife Cyriaca lived in the city of Phrygia. They were both devout Christians, as was their son, Pancratius. After the death of Cyriaca, Clemonius fell ill; but before he died he entrusted his son to his brother, Dionysius. (No mention whatever is made of the trip from Phrygia to Rome, nor of their residence on the Caelian, nor of their baptism by a pope in hiding; the baptism would have been unnecessary in any case, because, according to *Redaction D*, Pancratius was already a Christian.) The story continues abruptly with the announcement to Diocletian that Pancratius is in town. After audience and discussion with the emperor, Pancratius is sentenced to execution on the Via Aurelia. The noble lady Soteris was martyred at the same time.

How are these redactions related? Franchi de'Cavalieri assumed that *Redaction B* was the original.⁵ In the opinion of Henri Leclercq, *Redaction D* was closest to the original,⁶ but this view is simply untenable, as will be clear from the summaries given above. In the opinion of G. N. Verrando, *Redaction A*—the text as printed by Mombricitus but preserved in no manuscript—was closest to the original, and the other redactions derive from it; Verrando's opinion was endorsed more recently by Cécile Lanéry.⁷

In my view, however, none of the four redactions can be regarded as representing the original. All four evidently derive—independently—from a lost but reconstructible archetype. Certainly *Redaction A* could not be the source of *Redactions B* and *C*. Consider the following statement in c. 1.

Redaction A: factum est autem ut in ciuitate Frigida.

Redaction B: factum est autem apud provinciam Phrygiam in civitate Synnada.

⁵ 'Della leggenda di S. Pancrazio', pp. 87–92.

⁶ *DACL* XIII/1, col. 1008.

⁷ Verrando, 'Le numerose recensioni della *Passio Pancratii*', pp. 118–23; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 289, n. 620.

Redaction C: fuit quidam vir apud provinciam Frigiam in civitate Sinada.

It is clear from this one example that *Redaction B* must here preserve the original reading (slightly abbreviated in *Redaction C*): for *Frigida*, even if the spelling is simply a corruption of *Phrygia*, is not a city, whereas Synnada (*Redactions B* and *C*) is indeed a city in the province of Phrygia (modern Turkish Şuhut). That is to say, the author of *Redaction A* has abbreviated the original statement to the point of nonsense by making 'Phrygia' a city (and misspelling it *Frigida*), and, in respect of this sentence at least, *Redactions B* and *C* more closely represent what must be the original sense.

In *Redaction A*, the narrative is set during the 'Great Persecution' (*immanis . . . persecutio . . . sub Dioclitiano et Maximiano*) of Diocletian and Maximian (c. 1); but when Dionysius and Pancratius arrive in Rome, they are said to have been baptized by Pope Cornelius (c. 2). The implied chronology is preposterous, of course: Pope Cornelius died in 252, long before the Great Persecution (which began in February 303); but preposterous chronology like this is a hallmark of these Roman *passiones*, and cannot per se be taken as a token of inauthenticity. However, the authors of *Redactions B* and *C* decided to revise the text, each in his own way, in order to remove the glaring anachronism. The author of *Redaction B* did so by replacing Pope Cornelius with Pope Gaius (282–95), who at least had the merit of having been alive in the time of the tetrarchy (Diocletian became emperor in 284), though not of course of the Great Persecution. The author of *Redaction C* solved the problem in a different way,⁸ not by changing the name of the pope, but by changing the emperors in whose principate the narrative is set, so that the story takes place during the joint principate of Valerian and Gallienus (253–60), implying a chronology which almost coincides with the pontificate of Cornelius.⁹ (The author of *Redaction D* solved the problem more crudely by eliminating the papal baptism altogether, and by making Pancratius and his parents Christians before they left Phrygia, even though this crude excision left his narrative without any explanation of how Pancratius got to Rome.)

It is obvious, in any case, that the *passio* of St Pancratius was an attempt to give a local habitation and a name to the martyr whose remains were preserved on the Via Aurelia; and it is a reasonable assumption that the

⁸ See the valuable discussion of this redaction (my *Redaction C*) by Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Della leggenda di S. Pancrazio', pp. 92–5.

⁹ Having reassigned the martyrdom to the principate of Valerian and Gallienus, the author of *Redaction C* was obliged to eliminate the final statement of the text, as preserved in *Redaction B*, concerning the virgin Soteris, to the effect that Soteris was martyred during the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian, i.e. in AD 304, since this information would be in flagrant contradiction to his setting of the martyrdom of Pancratius in the principate of Valerian and Gallienus (253–60).

work was composed by a cleric of the basilica of St Pancratius. But very little was known of this local martyr. His Phrygian origin may simply be a reflex of the fact that there was a community of 'Phrygians', that is, Montanists, on the Via Aurelia.¹⁰ His death is not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum*, and the earliest record of his martyrdom appears to be the entry for 12 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, the death of St Pancratius' (Appendix III, p. 653). To judge from parallels in other *passiones*, the lady, Octavilla, who is said to have buried St Pancratius (c. 4) was probably a local landowner who made available a private estate for the burial of Christians. On the site of the burial, which was perhaps marked by a *memoria* of some sort, a basilica was subsequently constructed. We know from the *Liber pontificalis* that Pope Symmachus (498–514) 'built the basilica of St Pancratius',¹¹ and that Pope Honorius (625–38) 'built from the ground up a basilica to St Pancratius the martyr at the second mile of the Via Aurelia'.¹² It is this basilica of Honorius which is mentioned in the seventh-century pilgrim itinerary known as the *Notitia ecclesiarum* (composed during the pontificate of Honorius, 625–38): 'from there you walk to St Pancratius, whose body lies in peace in an attractive church on the Via Aurelia, which St Honorius the pope rebuilt in large part' (Appendix IV (a) [§12], p. 662). Although the present church of S. Pancrazio underwent successive remodellings from the fifteenth century onwards, its shape and structure largely represent the church as rebuilt by Honorius in the early seventh century. Excavations have revealed that the original (Symmachan) basilica was built over a subterranean cemetery;¹³ as reconstructed a century later by Honorius, the basilica consisted of a

¹⁰ We know from the *Praedestinatus* of Arnobius the Younger that SS. Processus and Martinianus (on whom see no. XIX) were said to be 'Phrygians' (*Phryges*), because they held to the same religious belief as Tertullian (*Praedestinatus* i. 86: CCSL XXV B, pp. 49–50), that is, they were Montanists, and there was a community of Montanists or 'Phrygians' living on the Via Aurelia in the late fourth century; see Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', p. 72, and A. Ferrua, 'Di una comunità montanista sull'Aurelia alla fine del IV secolo', *La civiltà cattolica* 87/2 (1936), 216–27. On the origins of Montanus in Phrygia, see EEC I, pp. 570–1; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 404–10; and no. XIX (p. 382, n. 3). The presence of these 'Phrygians' or Montanists on the Via Aurelia may have suggested an origin for Pancratius; on the other hand, it is known from inscriptions that there were many Greeks from Asia Minor living in Trastevere at the time, so a Phrygian origin is not *ipso facto* implausible (see Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'Della leggenda di S. Pancrazio', pp. 96–7).

¹¹ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 124; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 260–3; trans. Davis, p. 47.

¹² *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 172; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 324; trans. Davis, p. 66.

¹³ On the cemetery, which has yet to be fully explored, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 61–70; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 269–74; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 186–7; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 234–7; G. N. Verrando, 'La chiesa di S. Pancrazio e le sottostanti regioni cimiteriali', *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria* 113 (1990), 31–82; and S. Serra, 'S. Pancratii basilica, coemeterium, monasterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 163–5, with figs. 164–5.

three-aisled nave with a semicircular apse sited over a ring crypt which allowed access to the martyr's shrine.¹⁴

Text. Compared to some of the *passiones* translated in the present volume, that of St Pancratius seems to have enjoyed a relatively modest circulation, at least judging from the numbers of manuscripts listed in *BHLms* and elsewhere for *Redactions B* and *C*. In the translation which follows, I have attempted to reproduce the text as (on my understanding of the relationships) it might have stood in the lost but reconstructible original: that is, I have basically translated *Redaction B*, but have replaced *Redaction B*'s reference to Pope Gaius (c. 2) with that of *Redaction A*'s anachronistic reference to Pope Cornelius, on the understanding that the anachronistic error was committed by the author of the original (lost) text, and was subsequently emended by the authors of *Redactions B* and *C* so as to remove the anachronism. In this reconstruction, *Redaction D* has no place. Note that, for sake of convenience, I adopt the chapter numbering of the Bollandists' edition of *Redaction B* (the text of *Redaction A* as printed by Mombricitus has no chapter numbers, as is usual in texts printed by Mombricitus, and the Bollandist editors of *Redaction C* follow the chapter numbering of their predecessors).

1. In those days there was the 'Great Persecution' of Christians under Diocletian and Maximian, most wicked of emperors, (requiring) that they sacrifice to idols.¹⁵ Now it happened in the province of Phrygia, in the city of Synnada,¹⁶ following the death of Cleon and his wife Cyriaca, who were of noble birth (and) whose son was Pancratius, that after the death of the mother his father had entrusted him [Pancratius] to his brother Dionysius, making him swear by the almighty god and all his power and all the gods, that he would look after the patrimony, both there [in Phrygia] and in Rome, and would not be seen to be a fortune-hunter of detestable avarice in respect of his nephew, but like the worthy brother of his father would show himself greatly devoted to him in every respect. Dionysius began to love and cherish Pancratius like a dear brother.

¹⁴ On the basilica, see A. Nestori, 'La basilica di San Pancrazio in Roma', *RACr* 36 (1960), 213–48; Krautheimer, *CBCR* III, pp. 154–75, with pl. VI; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 163–4; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 248, with pl. XLIV; and *idem*, *Le prime chiese*, pp. 258–9.

¹⁵ The terms of the 'Fourth Edict' of persecution (issued January or February 304): all inhabitants of the empire were ordered to sacrifice to the gods, on pain of death (De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, p. 38; Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 182). There is no evidence that this Fourth Edict was ever promulgated or enforced in the West, but it would have been in force in Phrygia.

¹⁶ On Synnada (modern Turkish Şuhut), see K. Belke and N. Mersich, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, IV: *Phrygien und Pisidien* (Vienna, 1990), pp. 393–5, and Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 62 (E4). Synnada was about forty miles NE of Apamea, on the Roman road from Apamea to Dorylaeon.

2. And after three years it happened that they both travelled to Rome.¹⁷ And while they were staying there, they began to live in an apartment block¹⁸ on the Caelian Hill, with all their relatives, in one of their own properties.¹⁹ And because the persecution of Christians was intense, Cornelius, the pope of Rome,²⁰ was hiding in the vicinity of Dionysius and Pancratius. And when Dionysius heard of all the miracles which Pope Cornelius was performing—how he had dissuaded the entire populace from the worship of idols and had led them to the way of eternal life—it happened that Dionysius, together with his nephew, would come to his notice. And they arrive at the door of St Cornelius. Eusebius, the doorkeeper, was there, a man of utter holiness; and they ask that they be found worthy to be brought to his notice. Eusebius, going inside, says to St Cornelius: ‘My lord father, there are some distinguished men outside, and they ask that they may be deemed worthy to enter the residence of your Holiness.’ On hearing this, Cornelius began to be filled with great joy, and, prostrating himself in prayer to God, said: ‘I thank you, my Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, Who deigned to reveal me as Your least servant.’ And he immediately ordered them to be brought in. When they were brought in, Dionysius and Pancratius threw themselves at the feet of St Cornelius, and began to ask that they be found worthy to worship the God Whom he worshipped. And, raising them up, the holy man began to embrace them, declaring and instructing them in every aspect of heavenly divinity. After twenty days he baptized them and made them Christians. Instructed thus in the sacraments of Christianity, they began to be so inflamed with the fear of God that they would offer themselves willingly to the persecutors.

3. Meanwhile, it happened after a few days that Dionysius passed to the Lord, with heavenly rewards, a dear man worthy of God. And because the madness of the pagans against the Christians was extreme, they began to shout out with violent fury, saying: ‘Worthy and devout Emperors, take away from this city the sorcerers and cruel Christians, through whom the entire world is being deceived, and your entire realm is being subverted.’ Then Diocletian,

¹⁷ The implied chronology is impossible. If we add three years to either 303 (when the ‘Great Persecution’ began) or 304 (when the ‘Fourth Edict’ requiring sacrifice to the gods was promulgated), we arrive at 306 or 307—by which time Diocletian and Maximian had abdicated (305) and the persecution in Rome had been terminated by Maxentius (306).

¹⁸ The Latin (of *Redactions A* and *C*) here reads *in insula caminiana*; *B* reads *in insula Cuminiana*, an obvious corruption. The adj. *caminianus*, -a, -um, is not recorded in *TLL*, but apparently derives from an attested Late Latin meaning of *caminus*, ‘a room’ (see Souter, p. 36), whence an *insula caminiana* appears to have been some kind of apartment block.

¹⁹ In late antiquity, the Caelian was a residential quarter for senatorial families, with lavish dwellings on the summit and *insulae* on the slopes: see Meneghini and Valenzani, *Roma nell’alto medioevo*, pp. 151–5.

²⁰ Pope Cornelius (251–2); see *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 28–31; ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 150–1; trans. Davis, p. 9. See also the *passio* of Pope Cornelius, no. VII, with nn. 3–4.

indignant and moved by anger, promulgated a law that, if anyone belonging to this sect was found, he would be punished without a hearing.²¹ In these circumstances Pancratius is arrested. And when the persecutors who had seized him learned that he was born of a distinguished family, they reported this to Diocletian; who ordered him to be brought to his palace with all haste.²² And when he saw the face of Pancratius, Diocletian was astounded at his extreme youth, which was wanting to die for Christ rather than to sacrifice to idols. And Diocletian says to him: 'Young man, I urge you not to die a disgusting death—because your age, as is clear enough, is not more than fifteen, and because you are born of noble kin through your father Cleon, who was a very dear friend of mine. And I wish to extract this from you, that you withdraw from this Christian madness, and restore yourself to your birthrights, on account of which I shall make you even richer and more distinguished, so that you will not be a stranger at my side, but I may have you as my son. But if my words of consolation are displeasing to you, I shall order that you be executed and your body burned, so that Christians will not come and make a martyr of you.' The blessed Pancratius said: 'Do not make the mistake, my lord Emperor, in thinking that, because you see me as a boy of fourteen years, I have less knowledge and understanding. Our Lord Jesus Christ has deigned to grant us knowledge so that all the terror of your magistrates and judges is with us no more than if we were seeing this in a picture. For the gods and goddesses, which you urge me to worship, are deceitful demons, who did not spare their own parents, and who incestuously polluted their sisters. I am amazed, dear Emperor, that it is not a disgrace for you to worship such demons: for if you knew today that your servants were like that, you would order them to be killed with unspeakable cruelty.'

4. Then the emperor Diocletian ordered him to be taken to Via Aurelia, and there to undergo capital punishment, because it was disgusting to him that he should be bettered and disgraced by a boy such as that. And so Pancratius, the blessed champion of Christ, was taken to the Via Aurelia, and was decapitated there, as had been commanded, and tranquilly underwent martyrdom. Then his body was secretly recovered by Octavilla at night, and she buried it, embalmed with spices and wrapped in linen shrouds, in a tomb, on 12 May.

²¹ Among the four edicts of persecution promulgated by Diocletian, none has wording of this sort; cf. De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, pp. 35–8, and Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, pp. 179–82.

²² A 'palace of Diocletian' is mentioned only in *passiones martyrum* (cf., for example, the oblique and spurious references to 'Diocletian's palace' in the *passio* of St Sebastian: III.1 with n. 24, III.60, and III.85), and is not known from reliable historical sources. See G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Diocletiani', *LTUR* IV, p. 44, who inclines to think that the present mention of the 'palace of Diocletian' refers in fact to the well-known Baths of Diocletian.

At that same time a holy virgin named Soteris, born of noble kin, underwent martyrdom, in the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth consulship of Maximian [AD 304],²³ during the reign of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

²³ On the virgin martyr Soteris, see BSS XI, cols. 1328–9 [B. Cignitti]. It is not clear why the name of Soteris has been added here as a sort of appendage to the *passio* of St Pancratius, with whom she appears to have had no connection. The addition was possibly prompted by the entry for 12 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, the death of St Pancratius. On the Via Aurelia, Soteris the virgin' (Appendix III, p. 653). Perhaps it was simply the location of her martyrdom—the Via Aurelia—which suggested an association with St Pancratius. But note that the death of a virgin named Soteris is similarly recorded against 6, 10, and 11 February in the same *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, who is said there to have been buried on the Via Appia (Appendix III, p. 651). It is not clear how the separate entries are related, and whether we have to do with two virgins named Soteris, one buried on the Via Aurelia, the other on the Via Appia, or whether one is a doublet of the other. The date which is assigned to the martyrdom of Soteris in the present *passio*—the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth consulship of Maximian [AD 304]—appears to have been detached from an entry pertaining to a different saint in the *Depositio martyrum*: in that text the very same date, with the same specifications of the ninth and eighth consulships of Diocletian and Maximian, is assigned to the martyrdoms of Parthenius and Calocerus (19 May) and Bassilla (22 September): Appendix I, pp. 634, 636.

XXVI

Pope Stephen I

c.600 × 650; relevant to the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia), and to the cemetery of Apronianus (Via Latina)

This pedestrian and highly derivative *passio* of Pope Stephen I (254–7)¹ is an epic *passio*, treating the martyrdoms of a concatenation of saints, which was largely confected from earlier *passiones*, such as those of St Sebastian (III), SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV), St Polychronius and associates (XVI), SS. Marius and Martha (XXII), and SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII); the final chapter was elaborated by the author from an epigram by Pope Damasus on the martyr Tarsicius. The author also drew on the entry for Pope Stephen in the *Liber pontificalis*, from which he took the (erroneous) detail that Pope Stephen I was martyred in 255. The various literary debts imply that the present *passio* was composed at some point during the first half of the seventh century.

The narrative is as follows. During the persecution of Christians under Valerian and Gallienus, when the property of Christians was being confiscated, Pope Stephen assembled his clergy and told them to scorn all earthly possessions (c. 1). The Christian community then assembled in the Nepotian crypt, and Stephen performed a number of ordinations (c. 2). A military tribune named Nemesius came to Pope Stephen, saying that he had a daughter who had been blind from birth, and asking for the two of them to be baptized; Stephen took him to the *titulus*-church of Pastor and duly baptized them (c. 3). Following baptism, the daughter, named Lucilla, recovered her sight; many more people were baptized, and Nemesius was ordained a deacon by Pope Stephen (c. 4). Valerian issued a decree that Nemesius, if apprehended, was to be executed; Nemesius encountered Valerian and Maximus, the consul, sacrificing at the temple of Mars on the Via Appia; Nemesius prayed to God that the devilish practice be terminated, whereupon Maximus was seized by a demon and subsequently died (c. 5). Nemesius was detained and taken for trial at the Claudian palace, where he engaged in a lengthy debate with Valerian on the

¹ Listed *BHL* 7845 and *CPL* 2236; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 178–9 and 309, and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 292–3.

merits of Christian belief (c. 6). Valerian then arrested Symphronius, the trustee of Nemesius, and handed him over to the tribune, Olympius, to be tortured, with the aim of acquiring the property of Nemesius (c. 7). Olympius initiated the torture, but when a statue of Mars was brought in, Symphronius prayed and the statue dissolved; Olympius reported this to his wife Exuperia, who urged him, in the light of the miracle, to believe in Christ, and so Olympius entrusted the custody of Symphronius to one Tertullinus, the co-owner of his house (c. 8). That night Olympius and Exuperia, together with their son Theodulus, went to Symphronius, and threw themselves at his feet, asking to be baptized; Olympius then showed Symphronius a room filled with gold and silver effigies of gods, and Symphronius ordered that all these were to be melted down and the proceeds to be distributed to the poor (c. 9). Symphronius reported these events to Nemesius, who went to Pope Stephen, as a result of which all members of the household of Olympius were baptized (c. 10). When these events were reported to Valerian and Gallienus, Nemesius and his daughter Lucilla were arrested and sentenced to capital punishment; they were duly executed at the temple of Mars on the Via Appia, and their bodies were recovered and buried by Pope Stephen in a cemetery on the Via Latina (c. 11). Valerian then summoned Symphronius, together with Olympius, Exuperia, and Theodulus, to trial at the temple of Tellus; during the trial, Symphronius and Olympius defended their Christian belief vigorously (c. 12). They were accordingly all sentenced to be burned alive at the statue of the sun next to the amphitheatre; Pope Stephen recovered their bodies and buried them in a cemetery on the Via Latina (c. 13). Valerian and Gallienus now ordered the arrest of Pope Stephen, who went into hiding, but twelve members of his clergy were arrested and executed without trial; Tertullinus, who was still a pagan, recovered their bodies and buried them on the Via Latina (c. 14). Pope Stephen sent for Tertullinus, instructed him in Christian doctrine, and ordained him a priest; within two days of his ordination, Tertullinus was arrested, and brought for trial before Valerian, who demanded that he hand over the possessions of Olympius (c. 15). Valerian then handed Tertullinus to the prefect Sapricius, who brought him to trial at his own tribunal (c. 16). When Tertullinus proved to be recalcitrant, Sapricius ordered that he be tortured on a horse-frame; when the torture had no effect, and the property of Olympius could not be acquired, Tertullinus was sentenced to capital punishment and then executed at the second mile of the Via Latina, after which his body was retrieved and buried there by Pope Stephen (c. 17). Valerian then arrested Pope Stephen and interrogated him (c. 18). Stephen was taken to the temple of Mars and asked to worship the idol of Mars; but Stephen prayed for the idol to be destroyed, whereupon a mighty clap of thunder destroyed the temple and the soldiers fled, abandoning Stephen and the Christians (c. 19). Then Stephen went with the Christians to the cemetery of St Lucina, and celebrated mass there (c. 20). Valerian sent a larger

detachment of soldiers, who found Stephen as he was celebrating mass; he was executed there, and buried in the cemetery of Callistus (c. 21). On another day, an acolyte named Tarsicius was arrested while he was carrying the sacraments; he was duly executed, and then buried in the cemetery of Callistus (c. 22).

It is appropriate to treat this large cast of characters in order of appearance, beginning with Pope Stephen himself.

Pope Stephen (cc. 1–4, 11, 13–15, 17–21). As the *passio* states (c. 21), Stephen was one of the popes buried in the Papal Crypt in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.² Although the dates of his pontificate overlap with those of the Valerianic persecution, it is not certain that he was in fact a martyr: he is not named in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I), and is not the subject of an epigram by Pope Damasus (Appendix II). The earliest sources which describe him as a martyr are the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, which contains the following entry for 2 August, the date of his deposition as given in the present *passio*: ‘Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, St Stephen the pope’ (Appendix III, p. 655),³ and the *Liber pontificalis*, which states explicitly that Stephen was a martyr (*martyrio coronatur*).⁴ But neither of these sources can be guaranteed to date from earlier than the sixth century.

Nemesius and Lucilla (cc. 3–7, 11).⁵ According to the present *passio* (c. 11), Lucilla was executed by sword at the temple of Mars on the Via Appia, but Nemesius, after having been forced to watch the execution of his daughter, was beheaded at a different place, located ‘between the Via Appia and the Via Latina’; he was then buried near to this place on 25 July, ‘on the Via Latina not far from the city (walls)’. There is no entry for either of these martyrs against 25 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (see Appendix III). However, the fact that the burial of Nemesius on the Via Latina is mentioned in all three of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries (Appendix IV) in conjunction with the burial of St Eugenia, makes it possible to identify the cemetery in which Nemesius was buried as the ‘cemetery of Apronianus’ at the second mile of the Via Latina.⁶ (The site of Lucilla’s burial is not mentioned in any of these sources.)

² On the Papal Crypt, see Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, pp. 15–37, with discussion of Pope Stephen at pp. 19 and 22; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–200; Styger, *Martyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 77–93; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 210–11; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 49–67; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196–203; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 145–7; and above, no. IV (p. 141, n. 11).

³ Cf. also the entry for 9 August in the same source, which lists all the popes who are buried in the Papal Crypt, and several unidentified others: ‘Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Melchias [i.e. Miltiades], Stephen, Urban, Lucius, Manon, Anteros, Numidianus, Laudicius, Julian, Polycarp’ (Appendix III, p. 655).

⁴ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 33; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 154; trans. Davis, p. 10.

⁵ *BSS IX*, cols. 801–2 [A. Amore].

⁶ On this cemetery, see Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 170, and D. Nuzzo, ‘Aproniani cimiterium’, *LTUR. Suburbium I*, pp. 141–3. The cemetery had been known to

Symphronius, Olympius, Exuperia and Theodulus (cc. 7–10, 12–13).⁷ Symphronius is said to have been executed, in company with Olympius, Exuperia, and Theodolus, on 26 July 255, and then buried at the first mile of the Via Latina (c. 13). The date of these martyrdoms is not recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, nor in any liturgical book. However, in one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *De locis sanctis martyrum*, there is the following record of the burial of the clergy of Pope Stephen in the same cemetery as St Eugenia: ‘there, too, is St Stephen the pope, with his clergy numbering twenty-eight martyrs; and there is St Nemesius; and SS. Olympius, Symphronius, Theodolus, Superius’ (Appendix IV (b) [§7], p. 663). The ‘twenty-eight martyrs’ presumably include the twelve members of Pope Stephen’s clergy who are named in c. 14; and, in the final phrase, ‘Superius’ is obviously an error for ‘Exuperia’; but the itinerary is mistaken to state that Pope Stephen was buried in this same cemetery (he was in fact buried in the Papal Crypt in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia: see above). The essential point is that, by the seventh century, all four martyrs—Symphronius, Olympius, Exuperia, and Theodulus—were thought to be buried in the same cemetery as St Eugenia, that is to say, the cemetery of Apronianus, at the second mile of the Via Latina, where Nemesius was also buried (see above).⁸

Tertullinus (cc. 8, 14–17).⁹ Tertullinus is said to have been executed on 31 July and then buried by Pope Stephen in a catacomb at the second mile of the Via Latina.¹⁰ According to the *Liber pontificalis*, the basilica which was built over the catacomb of Tertullinus was restored by Pope Hadrian I (772–95).¹¹ But the site has never been identified, and Tertullinus is not mentioned against 31 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III), nor in any of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries. His body was subsequently translated to the church of S. Prassede by Pope Paschal I (817–24).

Antonio Bosio (1575–1629), but was then lost sight of; it was only rediscovered by excavation in 1937 by Enrico Josi: see Josi, ‘Cimitero cristiano sulla via Latina’, *RACr* 16 (1939), 19–48 and 197–240; ‘Cimitero cristiano sulla via Latina (continuazione)’, *ibid.* 17 (1940), 7–39, and ‘Di un nuovo cimitero sulla via Latina’, *ibid.* 20 (1943), 9–45. Marucchi (*Le catacombe romane*, pp. 303–5) discusses evidence for the existence of the cemetery in anticipation of Josi’s discovery.

⁷ BSS XI, col. 1229 [A. Amore], s.v. ‘Sinfronio, Olimpio, Teodulo e Essuperia’.

⁸ Cf. Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 133.

⁹ BSS XII, col. 432 [A. Amore].

¹⁰ On the cemetery of Tertullinus, which has never been convincingly identified, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 232; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 176; A. Augenti, ‘Tertullini, cimiterium, basilica’, *LTUR. Suburbium* V, p. 143; F. Bisconti, ‘Raffaele Fabretti e il cimitero di Tertullino’, in Raffaele Fabretti, *archeologo ed erudito*, ed. D. Mazzoleni (Vatican City, 2006), pp. 15–23, esp. 20–3, who suggests that the cemetery found by Raffaele Fabretti (1620–1700) and identified as that of Tertullinus may in fact have been the cemetery of Apronianus (on which see n. 6); and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 131–2.

¹¹ *LP*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 510; trans. Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 164.

Tarsicius (c. 22).¹² According to the *passio*, Tarsicius was detained by soldiers while carrying the *fermentum*¹³—that is, the host, which had been consecrated by the pope and then taken on Sundays to the various *titulus*-churches in Rome, on the grounds that it was impossible for the pope to celebrate mass in all these churches at once—and, because he would not relinquish it, was beaten to death; his body was buried in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia. The *passio* implies that Tarsicius was buried in the Papal Crypt; but we know from the pilgrim itinerary *De locis sanctis martyrum* that in fact Tarsicius was buried together with Pope Zephyrinus (199–217) in a separate crypt (Appendix IV (b) [§6], p. 663: ‘and there St Tarsicius lies together with St Zephyrinus in one tomb’).¹⁴ The crypt was embellished with an epigram by Pope Damasus, as follows:

Whoever (you are who) reads this: recognize the equal merit of two (saints),
for whom Damasus produced inscriptions following their martyrdoms.
The Jewish populace had struck down Stephen with stones,
as he was preaching better things—he who had taken the trophy from the enemy;
he, the faithful levite [deacon], was the first to undergo martyrdom.
When the evil band was oppressing with its wickedness
St Tarsicius, as he was carrying the sacraments of Christ,
he wished, when attacked, to give up his own life
rather than to surrender the celestial body [of Christ] to the rabid dogs.¹⁵

It will be clear from the last four lines of this epigram that the author of the present *passio* simply expanded the information contained in Damasus’ poem; but whereas Damasus was commemorating the death of the protomartyr Stephen (Acts 7: 55–60), the author of the *passio* apparently understood Damasus to be referring to Pope Stephen, the subject of his composition. Without such a misunderstanding, there would have been no pretext for bringing Tarsicius into the present narrative.

The author of this dull and unimaginative *passio* derived much of his inspiration from earlier *passiones*, notably those of Sebastian (III), Pudentiana and Praxedis (XV), Polychronius and associates (XVI), Marius and Martha (XXII), and Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII);¹⁶ his debt to these earlier works is particularly clear in his recycling of topographical detail (e.g. the *crypta*

¹² BSS XII, cols. 136–8 [D. Balboni]; and see G. Belvederi, *Martire dell’eucaristia: S. Tarsicio* (Rome, 1947), pp. 14–20, with fig. 3 [the crypt of Pope Zephyrinus]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 144–5.

¹³ On the *fermentum*, see DACL V/1, cols. 1371–4 [F. Cabrol].

¹⁴ On the crypt of Zephyrinus and Tarsicius, see Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 198.

¹⁵ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 117–19 [no. 15]; Ferrua and Carletti, *Damaso e i martiri di Roma*, pp. 17–18 [no. 3]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 111–13; trans. Appendix II (d), p. 640.

¹⁶ Cf. Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, p. 293, with n. 633.

Nepotiana, from XVI.16; the Claudian palace, from XXII.6, and the temple of Tellus, from several earlier *passiones*). On the other hand, it was laid under contribution in turn by authors of later *passiones*, notably that of the 'Greek Martyrs' (XXVIII). These various relationships, and the author's apparent first-hand knowledge of the Damasan epigram on Stephen and Tarsicius, suggest that the *passio* of Pope Stephen was composed during the first half of the seventh century.

Text. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Augusti* I [1733], pp. 139–44; the chapter numbering is that of the Bollandists.

1. In the days of Valerian and Gallienus,¹⁷ many Christians went into hiding in order to avoid the savagery of the tyrants; but others, bringing themselves forward, achieved the palm (of martyrdom). For a law had been passed that whoever could produce a Christian in hiding would be awarded his property, and could choose whatever military honour he would wish.¹⁸ Then the blessed Stephen, bishop of Rome,¹⁹ spoke to all his assembled clergy, saying: 'Brothers and fellow soldiers of mine, you have heard the savage commands of the devil—in plain words, if any Christian is arrested by a pagan, he [the pagan] will get all his property. And so you, brothers: scorn earthly possessions, so that you may obtain the heavenly kingdom. Do not fear the princes of the world; but pray to the Lord God of heaven, and to Jesus Christ, His Son, Who has the power to snatch us all from the hands of our enemies and the savagery of the devil, and to be associated with His grace.' Bonus the priest said: 'We wish to abandon our earthly possessions, and even to pour out our blood for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—if, however, we will be found worthy to obtain His grace.'

2. And when they had both spoken these things, all the clergy prostrated themselves at the feet of the blessed Stephen, saying that if any of them had pagan infants in their homes, or in the homes of their neighbours, they were to be brought to the blessed Stephen and baptized. The blessed Stephen ordered

¹⁷ Valerian was emperor from 253 until 260, when he died in captivity in Persia; his son Gallienus was co-emperor from 253 until 260, and then sole emperor until he was murdered in 268. The Valerianic persecution began in 257 and reached its height in 258, when it claimed the lives of such famous martyrs as SS. Cyprian, Pope Sixtus II, and Laurence; but it was abruptly terminated by Gallienus after the death of Valerian; see Introduction, pp. 9–10. Since Pope Stephen is known to have died in 257 (not necessarily as a martyr), the events of the present *passio* are to be understood as taking place in that year, in spite of the misleading date reckoning (AD 255) given in c. 22.

¹⁸ No such law was ever promulgated; in particular, the stipulation that someone who informed on Christians could choose whatever military honour he wished is pure nonsense. Nevertheless, it is the case that an informer (*delator*) could, in cases which resulted in conviction, claim a quarter of the condemned person's property. On the legal implications of delation, see no. II (p. 77, n. 84).

¹⁹ Stephen was pope from May 254 to August 257 (*LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 33; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 154; trans. Davis, p. 10); see *EP* I, pp. 281–6 [M. Simonetti].

that they were all to gather the following day in the Nepotian crypt;²⁰ and when the little congregation had assembled in this same crypt, there were found to be present 108 people of both sexes; he consecrated them all that same day through the mystery of baptism, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he held a mass for their atonement, and all of them participated (in the mass). The following day the blessed Bishop Stephen consecrated there three priests, seven deacons,²¹ and sixteen clerics (in minor orders); and he taught them all about the kingdom of God and the eternal life. Then many of the pagans ran up in order to hear his words, and they were baptized by him.

3. Meanwhile, while these things were taking place, a certain military tribune named Nemesius arrived, who had an only daughter who since birth had had her eyes open but could see nothing at all. He prostrated himself at the feet of the blessed bishop Stephen, saying: 'I beseech you, my lord pope: baptize me and my daughter, so that she may gain her sight and you may snatch our souls from everlasting darkness, because up till now I have always been in misery because of my daughter's blindness.' The blessed Stephen said to him: 'If you will believe with all your heart, everything will be provided for you as a believer.' Nemesius said: 'Up until now I have believed with all my heart, and I do believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, Who also opened the eyes of a man born blind;²² and I have come to your Holiness, not unwillingly, through His calling, not through the urgings of men.' And that same day the blessed Stephen, bishop of the city of Rome, took him to the *titulus*-church of Pastor.²³ And when he had catechized him and his daughter in accordance

²⁰ On the *crypta Nepotiana*, see G. De Spirito, 'Crypta Nepotiana', *LTUR* I, p. 329. The word *crypta* cannot mean 'tomb' in this context, for burial of the dead was not permitted within the Roman city limits; rather, it must refer to an underground oratory, what in modern parlance would be called a basement. It is also mentioned in the *passio* of Polychronius and others (XVI.16). The precise location is unknown; De Spirito suggests that it should be located somewhere on the *Vicus Patricius*, and is perhaps to be identified with the church of S. Lorenzo in Fonte (on which see Krautheimer, *CBCR* II, pp. 152–8, and E. Follieri, 'Antiche chiese romane nella *passio* greca di Sisto, Lorenzo ed Ippolito', *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 17–19 (1980–2), 43–71, at 61–2).

²¹ Implying that one deacon had been appointed for each of the seven ecclesiastical *regiones*, which had come into existence in the time of Pope Fabian (236–50), according to the so-called 'Liberian Catalogue': 'He divided the regions among the deacons' (Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. 99); but cf. the entry for Pope Clement in the *Liber pontificalis*: 'he created the seven regions, dividing them among notaries faithful to the church so that each of them in his own region could concern himself with careful and diligent investigation into the acts of martyrs' (ed. Mommsen, p. 7; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 123; trans. Davis, p. 3). It is inherently unlikely that a pope as early as Clement in the last years of the first century would have been responsible for creating the complex administrative structure represented by the seven diaconal regions; nevertheless, the author of this entry in the *Liber pontificalis* was probably drawing here on the *passio* of Pope Clement (V.1); see discussion by Duchesne, 'Les régions de Rome au moyen-âge', in his *Scripta Minora*, pp. 91–114, at p. 92.

²² Mark 8: 23–5.

²³ The *titulus Pastoris* may have been an alternative name for the *titulus Pudentis* (i.e. the church of St Pudentiana), since a priest named Pastor figures importantly in the *passio* of SS.

with Christian practice, he ordered him to fast until evening. And when the evening hour was approaching, he blessed the baptismal font in the aforementioned *titulus*-church, and placed Nemesius in the water, saying: 'In the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit I baptize you. Do you believe', he said, 'in Almighty God?' And he replied: 'I believe'. 'And in Jesus Christ our Lord?', he said. And he replied, 'I believe'. 'And in the forgiveness of sins?' He replied: 'I believe'. 'And in the resurrection of the body?' He replied: 'I believe, my lord.'²⁴

4. And when he was raised up from the water, his daughter began to shout out, 'Behold', she said, 'I see the man who touched my eyes, and a brilliant light all around him.' Then he also baptized his daughter, named Lucilla; and he raised both of them up from the (baptismal) font. And many other people, prostrating themselves at the feet of Stephen the bishop, began to beseech him with tears that they be baptized by him. On that same day on which Lucilla received her sight, sixty-two people of both sexes were baptized by him. And then many honest persons, through the provision of divine grace, began to beseech the blessed Stephen that they be baptized by him. The blessed Stephen, therefore, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, began to celebrate mass and to hold consultations in crypts of the martyrs. And he ordained Nemesius, the father of Lucilla, a deacon.

5. Then Valerian, having learned that Nemesius the tribune, with his entire household, had believed in Christ the Lord and been baptized, and that his daughter had received her sight, reported this to Gallienus and Maximus, the consuls.²⁵ Having consulted, they decreed that wherever Nemesius was found, he was to be executed without a hearing. But Nemesius, fortified by the grace of Christ, went about the crypts and gathering-places of martyrs so that, wherever he found a Christian in need, he ministered to him from his own resources, as best he could. As Nemesius came one time in the silence of night to the vicinity of the temple of Mars on the Via Appia,²⁶ he found Valerian

Pudentiana and Praxedis; note especially the confusing statement in that work (Pastor speaking): 'he [Pudens] established a *titulus*-church in my name (*titulum nomini nostro constituit*) in the city of Rome' (XV.1). See Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentienne*, pp. 43–4, as well as M. Cecchelli, 'Il sacello di S. Pietro e l'oratorio di S. Pastore in S. Pudenziana: una messa a punto', *Romanobarbarica* 9 (1987), 47–64, and *eadem*, 'S. Pastor, titulus', *LTUR* IV, p. 62.

²⁴ On this unusually detailed set of baptismal questions, see Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen', pp. 129–30 [§35]; see also Sessa, 'Domestic Conversions', pp. 108 (the baptismal questions in the *passio* of Pope Stephen discussed alongside those in the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*, ed. Mohlberg, p. 74 [§§449–50]), and 114, and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 241 (*interrogatio*).

²⁵ The mention of Gallienus and Maximus sharing the consulship is problematic: Gallienus was consul seven times: in 254 (I), 255 (II), 257 (III), 261 (IV), 262 (V), 264 (VI), and 266 (VII); in 256, one of the consuls was L. Valerius Maximus, but 256 was not a year in which Gallienus was consul.

²⁶ On the temple of Mars on the Via Appia, and the nearby 'Hill of Mars' (*Clivus Martis*), see Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 50–1 (Unità Topografica 41: 'tempio di Marte') and

and Maximus sacrificing to demons in the temple of Mars, as was their practice. On seeing this, St Nemesius the deacon prayed to the Lord on his knees, saying: 'O Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth, disperse the counsels of devilish practice in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Whom You sent into this world; destroy Satan, so that these poor wretches may escape from his snares and may abandon these handmade idols, and may recognize You, God the Creator, Almighty Father, and Jesus Christ, Your Son.' Maximus was immediately seized by a demon, and began to shout out in a loud voice, 'Nemesius the Christian is burning me; see how his prayers afflict me.' They left the temple that same hour, and arrested Nemesius. And while they were holding him and were assailing him with insults, Maximus the consul suddenly breathed his last.

6. But those (soldiers) who were detaining Nemesius took him to Valerian in the Claudian palace.²⁷ When he was presented in person, Valerian said to him: 'Nemesius, where is your intelligence, which I have always known to be strengthened in thought and deed? Do I not know what is best, and what is worst? Yet I urge upon you what is most useful to you so that, having realized the truth, you will not abandon the gods, whom you adored and worshipped from your very infancy.' Nemesius the deacon replied tearfully, and said: 'Indeed I, a wretched sinner, always did abandon the truth, and I spilled innocent blood; and now, in a state burdened excessively with the accumulation of sins, I have obtained the mercy of Christ, the Son of God: I acknowledge my Creator, though with belated penitence, as the God of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ, His Son, through Whose baptism I have been redeemed; He opened the eyes of my daughter, something which none of the physicians could ever achieve; He even illuminated the eyes of our hearts so that, rejecting the superstition of blind idolatry, we would be converted to the true light of Christianity. I fear Him, I adore Him; I offer to Him the worship of my service; and I need Him and His assistance at all times; for I reject all idols made of stone and bronze, which I recognize to be demons, who seek to destroy us and damn us to eternal death in their company.' Valerian said: 'I know your incantations, through which you have even committed homicide, such that you would kill

52 (Unità Topografica 43: *clivus Martis*) as well as *eadem*, 'Martis clivus', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 45–7, and *eadem*, 'Luoghi del martirio di papa Sisto II', pp. 108–14 (the temple of Mars), 114–21 (the *clivus Martis*), and 121–5 (the topography of the present *passio*), as well as no. VI (p. 192 and n. 55) and no. VII (p. 198 and n. 21).

²⁷ The 'palace of Claudius' (*palatium Claudii*) is known solely from *passiones martyrum* (the present *passio*, and that of Marius and Martha (XXII.6)), and there is uncertainty about which emperor Claudius may have built it, and where precisely it was located (assuming that it was an actual building, and not merely a figment of the hagiographers' imagination); possibly, to judge from later sources such as the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, it was located on the Viminal, between the Colosseum and the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli. See G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Claudii', *LTUR* IV, pp. 41–2.

the consul Maximus with your magic arts, and strive through Christian practices to exert yourself against our and the public well-being.' Then Valerian, in a rage, ordered him to be committed to private custody.

7. He then sends for Symphronius, the trustee (*creditarius*)²⁸ of Nemesius; when he is presented, he asks him about the property of Nemesius. He [Valerian] (also) had his [Nemesius'] daughter Lucilla placed in the custody of a certain irreligious woman named Maxima. The next day Valerian ordered that Symphronius be handed over to a certain Olympius, a tribune, and be interrogated under torture. When he entered, Olympius said to him: 'Do you know why you have been brought in to me?' But Symphronius remained silent for a little while. Olympius says to him: 'Listen to me, Symphronius, and do what the emperors request; for if you do not do this, you will die by various punishments. Hand over to me all the property of Nemesius, and sacrifice to the gods, and continue to live happily.' Symphronius replied: 'If you want all the property of my lord Nemesius, I have already sold it on Christ's behalf, because it was His, and will be His; and if you compel me to offer a sacrifice, I (shall) offer to Jesus Christ, my Lord, the sacrifice of praise and confession, to Whom my lord Nemesius also offered himself.'

8. Then Olympius, filled with anger, said: 'Stretch him out on a frame, and beat him with staves; place before him a tripod and (an idol of) the god Mars: he will either offer libations to the gods, or be beaten longer with staves.' A golden simulacrum of Mars is brought in and placed before Symphronius, together with a tripod. When he saw the simulacrum, Symphronius said: 'May the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, destroy you!' And immediately the simulacrum was liquefied like mud. On seeing this, Olympius began to gaze in astonishment; and he ordered him to be taken into custody in his own house, saying: 'Tonight I shall exhaust all tortures on you.' And in his own home he handed him over to Tertullinus, the co-owner (*vicedominus*). Going in to his wife, Exuperia, he told her how the simulacrum of Mars had melted in the name of Christ, his [Symphronius'] God. Then Exuperia, his wife, says to him: 'If the power of Christ is so great, as you say, it is better for us to abandon the gods, who cannot assist themselves nor us. Let us seek out the man who bestowed sight on the daughter of Nemesius the tribune.' Then Olympius said to Tertullinus: 'I ask you, that Symphronius be held secretly in great esteem by you, because I am to request great treasures from him.'

9. That same night Olympius came with his wife Exuperia and their only son, named Theodulus, (to Symphronius), and they threw themselves at his

²⁸ On the meaning of *creditarius* ('a personal depositary, fiduciary, trustee'), see *TLL* IV, col. 1127, and Souter, p. 82. Valerian is interested in acquiring *bona damnatorum*—assuming that Nemesius will be condemned—for the imperial fisc (*res privata*).

feet, saying: 'We now know the power of Christ, that He is the true God, the Son of God, Who opened the eyes of the daughter of Nemesius the tribune. We ask you that you deign to baptize us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom you are preaching.' Symphronius said: 'If you do penance with all your heart, together with your wife and son, for the blood of the saints which you shed, all things will be granted to you as believers.' Olympius said: 'You may know now that I believe with all my heart in the God Whom you are preaching.' And he immediately opened his storeroom, where he had gold, silver, and stone effigies of many different idols, and he said to Symphronius: 'Behold, these things are in your power; do with them whatever you command.' Symphronius said to him: 'Smash all these idols with your own hands; melt down the gold and silver ones in a fire, and distribute the money to the needs of the poor; and then I will know that you believe with all your heart.' Olympius did what had been commanded of him; and he smashed the marble idols with hammers, and caused the gold and silver ones to melt in a fire. And while these things were taking place in his home, and the idols were being smashed, a voice was heard: 'My spirit resides in you, O Symphronius.'

10. On hearing this, Olympius and his wife began to be strengthened more and more with mighty fear in the fervour of their faith, and to hasten as quickly as possible to receive the mysteries of baptism; and they begged Symphronius insistently that he would press enthusiastically for this to take place. Symphronius therefore reported to Nemesius his master; and Nemesius went happily in haste to St Stephen, and explained everything in order. On hearing this, the blessed Stephen gave thanks to Almighty God and to Jesus Christ, His Son; and he went at night to the house of Olympius. And Symphronius followed the footsteps of the blessed Stephen, saying: 'Olympius asked to receive the sacrament of baptism, together with his wife and son'; and he showed him all the shattered idols. On seeing this, the blessed bishop Stephen said: 'We give thanks to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to show mercy to your servants, so that You can snatch them from the errors of the demons which they encounter in the worship of idols, and heap them up like wheat in Your granary.' Then he catechized them in accordance with ecclesiastical practice, and baptized all those who believed (in Christ) in the household of Olympius, especially Olympius himself, with his wife Exuperia and son Theodulus; and for the sake of their redemption he celebrated the offering (of mass) to God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

11. And after three days it happened that Valerian and Gallienus, hearing about all this, were enraged with extreme fury, saying: 'The worship of the gods is being taken away (from us) because of the superstition of (these) Christians.' And they sent and arrested Nemesius the deacon, together with his daughter Lucilla, whom they sentenced to execution without a hearing. Before the decapitation of Nemesius he had Lucilla, his daughter, slain with

the sword, on the Via Appia, in front of the temple of Mars.²⁹ Whence I deduce that this was done on the diabolical plan that the father, witnessing the cruel death of his daughter, would perhaps believe and offer him his agreement (to sacrifice). But the father, the secret recesses of whose (heart) the Holy Spirit already possessed, watched the precious death of his daughter, which he willingly accepted for the name of Jesus Christ; and so she travelled to the heavenly kingdom. But they ordered Nemesius the deacon to be beheaded (at a place) between the Via Appia and the Via Latina, on 25 July. Bishop Stephen recovered his body and buried it next to the place where he was beheaded, on the Via Latina, not far from the city (walls).³⁰

12. On another day, Valerian ordered that Symphronius be brought before him for a public hearing; and when soldiers had been dispatched, they brought him in burdened with chains, and naked, and in a halter, and (they also brought) Olympius, with his wife Exuperia and their son Theodulus. And they were brought in to the (temple of) Tellus;³¹ and Valerian and Gallienus were sitting in tribunal in the aforementioned place.³² At the herald's announcement, God's saints are brought into the emperors' presence. Valerian spoke to them in these words: 'Why do you not think of yourselves and adore the gods, whom we know to oversee the well-being of our state?' Symphronius replied: 'Up until now Christ oversees us: He has now deigned to lead us to glory.' But Gallienus said to Olympius: 'Olympius, up until now I have hesitated to impose punishment by torture; but I am in no doubt about your feelings, because you are abandoning our gods, whom you have always worshipped—and you even used to compel others to worship them! For you persecuted with torture, even including spilling their blood, those who would not consent to sacrifice to our gods.' Olympius replied: 'And indeed I did this, not as Olympius, but as someone wicked and cruel;³³ I repent and pour out tears of bitterness for these evils which I committed in the sight of Him in Whom I believe, the true and living God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, that He may deign to forgive the wickedness which I perpetrated on His saints, whose blood I caused to spill when I was an unbeliever.'

13. Gallienus, filled with anger, spoke to Valerian: 'If these people', he said, 'are not wiped out, the entire city of Rome will flock to their sect.' And so

²⁹ See n. 26. ³⁰ See n. 6 (the cemetery of Apronianus).

³¹ On the temple of Tellus, near to which was located the *Secretarium Tellurense*, the site of the offices of the urban prefecture, see no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

³² The urban prefect held his tribunals 'at (i.e. in the vicinity of) the temple of Tellus', because the offices (*secretarium*) of the prefecture were adjacent to the temple (see previous note). There is no reason why two emperors should have held a tribunal in the offices of the urban prefecture; but the author of this *passio* is extremely vague on matters of legal procedure.

³³ It is possible that the newly-converted Olympius intends a pun on his name: the adjective *olympius* in seventh-century Medieval Latin sources came to mean 'heavenly' (e.g. *Hisperica Famina* A. 376: 'angelicas olimpius suffulcit cateruas thronus', 'the heavenly throne supports a throng of angels' (ed. M. Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, I. *The A-Text* (Toronto, 1974), p. 92)); hence he is saying, 'I did these things not as an *olympius* (i.e. "heavenly (man)"), but as a wicked and cruel man'.

Valerian immediately ordered the saints to be burned alive; and, when sentence had been passed, they were led before the statue of the Sun next to the amphitheatre;³⁴ and they tied them to stakes with their hands bound; and they caused them to burn to death by lighting a fire in a heap of brushwood and blackthorn and the oakum from ships. And the blessed Symphronius, together with St Olympius and his wife, Exuperia, and their son, Theodulus, were shouting out when the fire was kindled: 'Glory to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to associate us with Your servants, the saints and martyrs.' And in saying this, they gave up their spirits. After their triumph their bodies were left in front of the statue of the Sun next to the amphitheatre; the soldiers departed. And St Stephen, the bishop, coming there that same night with his clergy, chanting devout hymns as usual, took away their bodies and buried them next to the Via Latina, at the first mile, on 26 July, in the year of the third consulship of Valerian and the second of Gallienus [AD 255].³⁵

14. After many days it happened that Valerian and Gallienus, the unspeakable persecutors of the Christian name, sought the blessed Stephen, bishop of the city of Rome, with great application, so that they could afflict him and his clergy with various tortures, and consign them to the finality of death; and they posted an edict in the most prominent places in the city, and announced, by means of heralds, that anyone who knew Stephen and his clergy to be hidden in hiding places, was to make this known immediately to the wicked ears (of the emperors), and they would receive all their property. Whence it happened that they found twelve of his clergy, whose names I record: Bonus, Faustus, Maurus, Primitivus, Calumniosus, John, Exuperantius, Cyril, and Honoratus. They ordered that they were to be executed at once, without trial. They were decapitated in the Via Latina, next to the aqueduct.³⁶ Tertullinus recovered their bodies, although he was still a pagan at the time, and placed them next to the bodies of SS. Jovinus and Basileus,³⁷ on the Via Latina, on 1 August.

³⁴ The 'statue of the Sun' was previously the colossal statue of Nero (120 feet high), erected by that emperor at the entrance to his Domus Aurea; but after the murder of Nero his statue was replaced by a statue of the Sun and dedicated to worship of the Sun god: see Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* xxxiv. 7, with discussion in Platner-Ashby, p. 168, and Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', pp. 228–30.

³⁵ The author of the *passio* apparently lifted this consular dating from the life of Pope Stephen I in the *Liber pontificalis* (trans. Davis, p. 10: '[he was bishop] to the 3rd of Valerian and the 2nd of Gallianus [Gallienus] (255)'), rather than from a consular list.

³⁶ The aqueduct in question is either the Aqua Claudia, the greatest of all Roman aqueducts, which crossed the Via Latina at the Arco di Travertino at the third mile (see Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, pp. 92–3 and 190–251; Richardson, pp. 16–17; and Z. Mari, 'Aqua Claudia', *LTUR* I, pp. 63–4), or the Aqua Marcia, whose source was virtually the same as the Aqua Claudia, and which emerged from its underground channel at the sixth mile of the Via Latina (Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, pp. 88–158; Richardson, pp. 17–18; and D. Cattalini, 'Aqua Marcia', *LTUR* I, pp. 67–9).

³⁷ SS. Jovinus and Basileus are commemorated on 25 December in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 650), and again on the same date in the 'Sacramentarium Veronense' (Appendix V (b), p. 669). But apart from their mention here in the present *passio*, nothing whatever is known of them; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 134.

15. On hearing of this, Pope Stephen sent for Tertullinus; instructing him in the Christian religion with much tuition, and teaching him about the kingdom of God and the eternal life, he brought (his instruction) to conclusion by baptizing him; and while he was still in his baptismal robes, he ordained him a priest. Among the other holy instructions which he gave him, St Stephen commended this in particular: 'Brother', he said, 'let it be your special concern to seek out the bodies of various holy martyrs.' Within two days of his ordination he was arrested by one Marcus, the prefect,³⁸ and was taken to Valerian. Valerian says to him: 'Do not delay in surrendering the possessions of Olympius, your lord and master.' Tertullinus replied to him as follows: 'If you seek the possessions of my lord, you will be able to live (forever), if you will believe in Christ the Lord and deny the idols of demons; for he [Olympius], in dying for Christ, took possession of them forever, Valerian said: 'Do the possessions of your lord bestow eternal life, therefore?' Tertullinus replied: 'Christ, the Lord God, Who has the power of life and death, bestows eternal life and the everlasting kingdom.' Valerian said: 'It appears to me that this man has gone insane. Let him', he said, 'be stretched out and beaten at length with staves.' And as he was being viciously beaten, Tertullinus shouted out: 'I give thanks to you, O Lord Jesus Christ, Who have not separated me from my master Olympius, Your servant, who preceded me by completing his martyrdom.' And while he was saying this between blows, Valerian ordered that torches be applied to his sides. It was said to him by the wicked (torturers): 'O Tertullinus, you blasphemer, hand over the possessions of your master, Olympius.' But Tertullinus, with an unflinchingly joyful expression on his face, said: 'Do more quickly, you wretch, what you are doing, so that from this fire you can offer me, although a sinner, as a sacrifice to Christ for His name.'

16. And so Valerian ordered that he be raised up, and be handed over to the prefect Sapricius,³⁹ saying: 'Enquire carefully from him concerning the possessions of Olympius, his master, and compel him to offer libations to the gods. If he will not do this, kill him with various punishments.' Sapricius, the prefect, immediately had a tribunal set up for himself in the place which is called 'the Mamurtine estates' (*privata Mamurtini*);⁴⁰ and he ordered him to

³⁸ The author neglects to specify whether this Marcus is the praetorian prefect or the urban prefect. No person of this name is recorded as the holder of either prefecture in 257: see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, p. 123, and Howe, *The Pretorian Prefect*, pp. 91–2.

³⁹ Again the author neglects to specify what prefecture Sapricius holds. Does the narrative imply two prefects, Marcus and Sapricius, of which we are to understand that one is the urban prefect, the other the praetorian prefect? In any case, no person named Sapricius is recorded as having held either prefecture at this time.

⁴⁰ See G. De Spirito, 'Privata Mamurtini', *LTUR* IV, p. 164, who points out that the *privata Mamurtini* were distinct from the 'Mamertine prison' (on the Capitol), and were arguably identical with the *clivus Mamuri* (named after Mamurius Veturius, the legendary Roman blacksmith), which ascended the Quirinal near the (present-day) church of S. Vitale; see F. Coarelli, 'Clivus Mamuri', *LTUR* I, pp. 282–3.

be brought in to him, with the herald making this announcement: 'Let Tertullinus, the guilty blasphemer, be brought in.' And when he was brought before the tribunal of the prefect, the prefect said to him: 'State your name.' Tertullinus replied: 'A sinner, the servant of the servants of Christ.'⁴¹ The prefect said: 'Are you a slave, or freeborn?' Tertullinus said: 'The devil has so filled your heart, that you cannot understand a man speaking to you. I said to you: "I am the servant of the servants of Christ".' Sapricius said: 'Acknowledge the things that are asked of you now, and do them without delay, and you will live: that is, sacrifice to the gods, and hand over the possessions of Olympius. Otherwise you will die for your evil deeds in the application of tortures.' The blessed Tertullinus replied: 'If you knew anything about the eternal life, you would not think about this present life, which will be assigned to eternal flames with the worshippers of demons.' Then he ordered his mouth to be smashed with stones. Tertullinus, therefore, giving thanks to God, said to the prefect: 'You have had my mouth smashed; my Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I am confessing, will smash you and the devil, the proponent of servitude to idol-worship.' Sapricius said: 'Why are you prolonging this? Do not delay in declaring the possessions of Olympius, and sacrifice to the gods, so that your life will not end in decapitation.' Tertullinus replied: 'I, being comforted in my Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom I believe, desire this: that I can let go of this present life and discover that eternal life, of which there is no end.'

17. Then Sapricius, in a rage, ordered him to be stretched out on a horse-frame, and for his joints to be twisted (out of shape). Amidst these torments, Tertullinus said: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, do not abandon Your servant as he is confessing You; but grant me the strength, while believing You to be the Son of God the Father, that in persevering I may give back to You this soul, which through Your grace and baptism You redeemed from the shadows of ignorance and the worship of idols.' Then Sapricius ordered him to be burned with flames. But he, strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, sought unceasingly the assistance of the Lord Jesus Christ with his words and heart. As he was hanging from the horse-frame, Sapricius reported, in his official capacity, to Valerian the tyrant, that Tertullinus was utterly mad, and was not being softened up by torture or warnings to sacrifice to the gods or to reveal the property of Olympius his master. Valerian, in a rage, replies, having passed sentence, that his head is to be struck off. He was taken down from the horse-frame and taken to the second mile of the Via Latina, and there was decapitated. St Stephen and his clergy, retrieving the body with hymns to God, buried it in the same place in a catacomb (*arenarium*), on 31 July.

18. On another day Valerian sent a large number of soldiers, and they arrested the blessed Bishop Stephen and a number of his clergy, that is, priests

⁴¹ The reply of Tertullinus has been lifted from the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.4), where Sisinnius replies, 'I am the sinner Sisinnius, servant of the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

and deacons.⁴² As he was being led off, many Christians followed him at a distance, weeping. On arrival the order was given that Bishop Stephen was to go in to the tribunal alone. Valerian said to him: 'Are you Stephen, who are trying to overthrow the state and with your preaching and admonitions are persuading the populace to abandon the gods?' The blessed Stephen said: 'I do not overthrow the state; but I admonish and urge (the people) that, having abandoned the demons who are worshipped as idols, they return to the true and living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and recognize that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is Himself God, Who with the Father and Holy Spirit alone is everlasting, so that they do not perish with the devil in everlasting death.'

19. Valerian said: 'And now you are to be handed over to execution, so that other god-fearing persons can live unharmed.' And he ordered him to be taken to the temple of Mars, and, when the sentence was read out, to be beheaded, if he would not consent to adore the simulacrum of the detestable Mars. Then the blessed Stephen, taken by the soldiers outside the city walls at the Appian Gate, to the temple of Mars, raised his eyes to heaven and in the presence of everyone there, said: 'Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who destroyed the tower of confusion in Babylon, destroy this place too, where with devilish superstition the souls of the people are perishing through worship of idols.' And immediately there was a mighty clap of thunder with terrifying lightning bolts; and the greater part of the profane temple collapsed. On seeing this, the soldiers took fright and fled, and abandoned the blessed Stephen, with all the Christians, who had gone along with him.

20. That same hour the blessed Bishop Stephen went, with all the Christians, to the cemetery of St Lucina,⁴³ and spoke words of consolation to all those who had come with him, that they should not fear the punishments of the adversary, with all their terrors, lest perchance through the promises of the tyrants they were to abandon the crown of martyrdom prepared for them, saying: 'We should be mindful that our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Do not fear those who kill the body, for they cannot kill the soul; but rather fear Him, Who

⁴² Here and throughout the narrative assumes that Valerian was resident in Rome in 257; but from at least 256, and probably from 254, he was on campaign against the Persians in Mesopotamia, where he was captured by King Sapor at Edessa in 259 or 260, and subsequently died in captivity. The account of his personal involvement in the persecution of Christians in Rome is pure fiction.

⁴³ There is no known 'cemetery of Lucina'; perhaps what is meant is the so-called 'crypts of Lucina', which are located in Area I of the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia; see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 221–32; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 212–13; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196, 198; and L. Spera, 'Lucinae ager, praedium', *LTUR* III, p. 243. But note also that someone named Lucina, 'a virgin and martyr', was buried in the 'upper part' of the cemetery of SS. Processus and Martinianus, according to the *Notitia ecclesiarum* (Appendix IV (a) [§12], p. 662). However, this cemetery is located on the Via Aurelia, to the west of Rome, whereas Pope Stephen, according to the *passio*, was executed and subsequently buried in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, to the south-east of the city, which suggests that the author was indeed thinking of the 'crypts of Lucina' in the cemetery of Callistus.

has the power to send both soul and body to hell".⁴⁴ With these and similar exhortations, like a good shepherd he provided pasturage for his sheep, who had been acquired by the blood of Christ. After that he offered the sacrifice (of mass) to Almighty God.

21. Valerian, on hearing what had taken place, and that the temple had been destroyed, and that there was a huge multitude of Christians with Stephen, sent a larger detachment of soldiers than the previous one; on arrival they found the blessed Bishop Stephen celebrating mass for the Lord. He was standing fearless and imperturbable before the solemn altar, and, always continuing with what he had begun, he was decapitated in that place on 2 August. There was a great lamentation from the Christians (assembled) there, who had seen off such a great shepherd to the celestial realms through the glory of martyrdom. They buried his body in the same crypt in the same place where he had poured out his blood, in the place which today is called the cemetery of Callistus, where he rests in peace.⁴⁵

22. Another day the soldiers of the pagans discovered an acolyte named Tarsicius, carrying the sacraments of the body of Christ; seizing him, the pagans asked him to explain what he was doing. But he, judging it to be inappropriate to cast pearls before swine,⁴⁶ wished in no way to surrender the sacred mysteries. They beat him with stones and staves for a long time until he breathed out his spirit; and turning over his lifeless body, these profane inquisitors could find nothing in his hands or clothing; and, abandoning the body, they fled in terror. Arriving at the gates on the Via Appia, they found a dense throng of Christians; and, returning to Valerian, they indicated all this and explained in sequence what had happened. That same day, the Christians recovered the sacred body of Tarsicius and buried it in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia;⁴⁷ and with the congregation of the Christians assembled there, they consecrated it [the hypogean basilica] in the name of Bishop Stephen and Bishop Sixtus (II) the martyr, on 24 August in the year of the third consulship of Valerian and the second of Gallienus [AD 255],⁴⁸ with our Lord, Jesus Christ reigning among us, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

⁴⁴ Matt. 10: 28.

⁴⁵ On the burial of Pope Stephen in the 'Papal Crypt' in the cemetery of Callistus, see p. 479 with n. 2, and esp. Wilpert, *Die Papstgräber*, p. 39.

⁴⁶ Matt. 7: 6.

⁴⁷ On the burial of Tarsicius in the crypt of Pope Zephyrinus in the cemetery of Callistus, see n. 14.

⁴⁸ This consular date-reckoning is preposterous (Pope Stephen is known to have died on 2 August 257, and Pope Sixtus II a year later, on 6 August 258); it has been lifted from the entry for Pope Stephen I in the *Liber pontificalis* (see above, n. 35).

XXVII

SS. Gordianus and Epimachus

c.600 × c.650 (?); relevant to the cemetery of SS. Gordianus and Epimachus (Via Latina), and to the estate/monastery *ad Aquas Salvias* (Via Ostiense)

This brief *passio*, which is situated during the days of the supposed persecution of Christians under Julian the Apostate, treats an encounter between a Christian priest named Ianuarius and the deputy Gordianus (in spite of the title of the work, Epimachus scarcely figures at all), which inevitably leads to the conversion, trial, and martyrdom of Gordianus.¹

The narrative is as follows. When the wicked emperor Julian was persecuting Christians, an aged priest named Ianuarius, a native of Antioch, was detained, and brought to trial before the deputy Gordianus (c. 1). Ianuarius was held in custody in the house of Gordianus; while there, Ianuarius was able to convert Gordianus and his wife Marina (c. 2). The tribune Clementianus was sent by the emperor to ascertain whether Ianuarius had repudiated his Christianity by sacrificing; when Julian learned of the conversion of Gordianus, he appointed Clementianus in his place, and ordered Gordianus to be held in custody, and for his wife Marina to be forced into servitude at the villa *ad Aquas Salvias* (c. 3). Clementianus summoned Gordianus to be brought before him, and ordered him to sacrifice; when he refused he was beaten with lead-weighted whips (c. 4). Gordianus refused to relent, and so was decapitated at the temple of Tellus; he was subsequently buried in a cemetery on the Via Latina, in a place where Epimachus had previously been buried (c. 5).

There is no mention of St Gordianus in the earliest martyrological sources (the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354, the *Epigrammata* of Damasus). The first source in which he is mentioned is the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, which has the following entry against 10 May: 'Rome, on the Via Latina, in his own cemetery, Gordianus, and Epimachus' (Appendix III, p. 653). The role of Epimachus is not clear from the wording of this entry, but more specific

¹ Listed *BHL* 3612; see discussion by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 194–5; *DACL* VI/1, cols. 1379–91 [H. Leclercq]; W. Hotzelt, 'Gordian und Epimachus', *Römische Quartalschrift* 44 (1938), 1–17; *BSS* VII, cols. 117–18 [A. Amore]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 129–30. This *passio* is not discussed by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie'.

information is given in the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, notably the *Notitia ecclesiarum*: 'Then [on the Via Latina] you will arrive at St Gordianus the martyr, whose body lies in peace beneath the main altar in the church of St Epimachus' (Appendix IV (a) [§7], p. 661). This information is amplified in *De locis sanctis martyrum*: 'Next to the Via Latina is the church of St Gordianus, where he lies buried with his brother Epimachus in one tomb' (Appendix IV (b) [§7], p. xxx). No other source, including the present *passio*, mentions that Gordianus and Epimachus were brothers. It might be concluded from these entries that someone named Epimachus had established a church and cemetery (on his own property) on the Via Latina, and was himself buried there;² and that subsequently a martyr named Gordianus, otherwise unknown, was buried there as well.³ Such a reconstruction would perhaps best account for the description given in c. 5 of the present *passio*. In any case, it is clear that, by the seventh century at latest, SS. Gordianus and Epimachus were recognized as martyrs, and it is very possible that a fresco discovered in the 1950s in a crypt in this cemetery was intended to be a depiction of the two martyrs.⁴ But why the author of the *passio*, who could conceivably have been a cleric of the cemetery-church of St Gordianus in the earlier seventh century, should have portrayed Gordianus as a high-ranking Roman magistrate (*uicarius*) subsequently converted to Christianity, and then martyred under Julian the Apostate, is unclear.

Text. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Mai II* [1680], pp. 552–3, and follows their chapter numbering.

1. In the days of Julian,⁵ the wicked emperor, many Christians went public. And when the wicked Julian heard this, filled with rage, he ordered them to be

² A later redaction of the *passio*—BHL 3613—identifies Epimachus with the Alexandrian saint of that name martyred under Decius (249–51) and described by Eusebius, *HE* vi. 41. 17; but there are no grounds for admitting this (later) tradition, which is a piece of learned nonsense prompted by the silence regarding Epimachus in the present *passio*.

³ On the cemetery of Gordianus and Epimachus on the Via Latina, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 232; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 85–7; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 168–9; A. Augenti, 'SS. Gordiani et Epimachi cymiterium, ecclesia, basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium III*, pp. 29–30; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 129–30.

⁴ A. Ferrua, 'Un nuovo cubicolo dipinto della via Latina', *Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia*, 3rd ser.: *Rendiconti* 45 (1972–3), 171–87. The fresco is catalogued by Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*, p. 71 [no. 1].

⁵ Julian, the so-called 'Apostate', is better known than many late Roman emperors because his early career and brief reign (361–3) are treated in detail by Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, bks. xx–xxv. It must be said that the portrait of Julian by authors of *passiones* (cf. XVIII.7) as a bloodthirsty persecutor of Christians is historical nonsense: while it is certainly true that Julian was a committed pagan, he took no measures against Christians except for forbidding them to hold chairs of rhetoric and philosophy, and closing the church in Antioch as a means of calming disturbances (caused by Christian mobs); see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxii. 10. 7, xxii. 13. 2. See the valuable modern studies by Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (London, 1975), pp. 159–86, esp. 163: 'In fact there was no persecution'; and G. W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (London, 1978), pp. 79–83. And note that Julian never set foot in Rome.

detained and to be held in public custody. Among them was a certain Christian named Ianuarius, an aged priest. After the third day the wicked emperor Julian sent for Gordianus his deputy (*uicarius*),⁶ and commanded him to interrogate Ianuarius the priest in a public hearing. Then Gordianus the deputy ordered Ianuarius the priest to be brought from prison and presented to him, as the king⁷ had commanded. Gordianus said to him: 'What is your name, or what race do you reveal yourself to belong to, tell us, fortunate orator.' St Ianuarius the priest replied, and said: 'If indeed you wish to know that I am a (Roman) citizen, I am Antiochene; if my race, I am a Christian born of Christian parents.' Gordianus the deputy said to him: 'Why do you move to deceive us with much verbosity? Now hear me, and choose one of two replies: either sacrifice to the immortal gods, and be a friend of our unconquerable emperor Julian, or receive the sentence for your unspeakable crimes.' St Ianuarius the priest replied, and said to Gordianus: 'If you agree with me, I hope to offer myself as a sacrifice of propitiation to my God; yet whatever you shall say to me, or promise, I am worthy to receive because of my sins—for my sins, however, as I said, not for (your) justice.' Gordianus replied and said to him: 'If you deserve all torments because of your sins, pour out libations to the gods, so that you may thereby deserve to be saved by us through having expiated them.' St Ianuarius the priest replied and said: 'I have indeed always been saved in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, and I shall always be saved, so I believe; what is more, I saved other persons, who wished to be saved, through participation in baptism in His name. If you had any wisdom, you would surely seek Him with all your heart, and would seek to find calm for your soul after so great a storm, and would have eternal life in permanency.'

2. Then Gordianus the deputy (*uicarius*) ordered him to be held under guard in his [Gordianus's] own house. At the Lord's inspiration, he called him that night and said that he wished for him [Ianuarius] to delight him with his words. St Ianuarius the priest said to him: 'My son, do not lose your chance, but rather do penance for the bodies of the saints whom you killed, and be baptized, so that you can find eternal rest, and not be burned in eternal fire.' Gordianus the deputy, touched by these words, said: 'And how will I be sure, if I shall have been washed [in baptism], that I escape eternal torments?' St Ianuarius the priest replied, and said: 'I promise you in the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, that if you will believe with all your heart and will be baptized, all the filth of your crimes shall be deleted, so that you may offer yourself

⁶ The term *uicarius* here refers to the 'deputy' of the urban prefect: see Sinnigen, 'The Vicarius Urbis Romae', and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 62–5; this much is clear from the fact that Clementianus, the successor of Gordianus as deputy, is conceived as conducting the trial at the temple of Tellus, since the offices (*secretarium*) of the urban prefecture were adjacent to the temple of Tellus; see Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine à Rome*, pp. 247–51 and F. Coarelli, 'Praefectura urbana', *LTUR* IV, pp. 159–60, and no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

⁷ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (p. 52, n. 32).

immaculate to the Lord Jesus Christ.' Gordianus the deputy said: 'Give me the capacity of believing.' St Ianuarius the priest said: 'That you confess the one godhead in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that, in doing penance, you reveal that you have sinned.' Then Gordianus the deputy went in tears to his wife, named Marina, and repeated all the advice of St Ianuarius the priest. Then at that same hour of the night, with his wife holding her husband's hand, they both came to St Ianuarius the priest; and, falling on the ground, cast themselves at his feet, asking that they be baptized by him, shouting out that they had sinned and saying to him, 'Redeem us from our sins.' St Ianuarius the priest replied to these (words), saying to them: 'See if you believe with all your heart, and that you do not have something concealed in your hidden recesses, because I know that you are honoured by the emperor.' Marina replied and said: 'We have one likeness of Jupiter, given to us by the emperor—a likeness for which holy martyrs are crucified. But what shall we do with it now? Yet I shall reveal to my Lord the way by which even we may deserve to receive the crown of life, when it shall be procured by us.' At that same hour, Marina led Ianuarius the priest into her apartment, and showed him the gilded bronze statue of Jupiter, and the bronze tripod. St Ianuarius, seizing the statue with its stand, melted it in a fire and cast it into the sewer, and thus he joyously catechized Gordianus, together with Marina his wife, and their household, numbering fifty-three persons of both sexes; and he baptized them all with their masters.

3. At that same time, after fourteen days, Julian the wicked emperor sent to Gordianus the deputy (*uicarius*) his tribune, named Clementianus, saying to him: 'Go and see if Ianuarius the priest has inclined to sacrifice to the great god Jupiter; or, if he has not persuaded him, then he is to be beaten with staves in the Forum of Trajan⁸ under public proclamation. And what the emperor Julian had commanded Clementianus to do, was done. Gordianus, in reply, said to Clementianus: 'O Clementianus, if you were to know the Lord Jesus Christ, you would not fear the threats and terrors of a mortal man; but rather you shall look to the eternal life, as I saw was already prepared for me. For I shall honour the holy priest, and I shall not now harm him: seeing him, I do

⁸ The Forum of Trajan is the latest, largest, and most magnificent of the Roman fora; its magnificence may be appreciated by the substantial ruins in the centre of Rome clustered around the justly-renowned Column of Trajan: see Platner–Ashby, pp. 237–45; Richardson, pp. 175–8; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 161–9; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 115–21; and J. Packer, 'Forum Traiani', *LTUR* II, pp. 348–56, with figs. 171–9, as well as the comprehensive analysis and reconstruction by J. E. Packer and K. L. Sarring, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome. A Study of the Monuments*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA, and Oxford, 1997). There is a condensed and accessible version of this important work by J. E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome. A Study of the Monuments in Brief* (Berkeley, CA, and London, 2001). For the state of the Forum of Trajan in the early Middle Ages (still functioning), see Meneghini and Valenzani, *Roma nell'alto medioevo*, pp. 72–7. The Forum of Trajan figures as the scene of a tribunal in the *passio* of the 'Greek Martyrs' (XXVIII.10).

not scorn to kiss his feet: through him I have been saved.' Then Clementianus, going to the palace, was noisily denouncing Ianuarius as a magician, who converted Gordianus the deputy with his magic arts. And when he went in to the emperor Julian, he said to him: 'Ianuarius, whom your good self used to praise because of his skill in letters, we now recognize as a magician: he has subverted your deputy, Gordianus, together with his wife and household, and even baptized them, and put away the gods of our State, melted down by fire into a mass'. Then Julian, the wicked emperor, filled with anger, ordered that St Ianuarius the priest and Gordianus be condemned in a public edict; and he appointed Clementianus as deputy (*uicarius*) in his place. He ordered Gordianus himself to be committed to public custody, but his wife Marina to be forced into the service of countryfolk at a certain estate called *ad Aquas Saluias*.⁹ He subsequently commanded that the case of Gordianus be heard in public, with Clementianus acting as judge.

4. At that same time, Clementianus ordered a tribunal to be set up for him in the temple of Tellus,¹⁰ and Gordianus to be brought before him, bound in chains. Clementianus interrogated him as follows, saying: 'Gordianus, have you so thoroughly scorned the decrees of our emperor, the eternal Augustus—who honoured you and adorned you with the distinction of high office—that with magic arts you would melt down and conceal our gods, in violation of the State and the well-being of our unconquerable emperor?' Gordianus replied and said to him: 'Rather I did this for the well-being of the State. For if I had all the manufactured idols, I would smash them and melt them down. For who would you say is more to be adored: the one who made them, or the one who is represented? I, however, adore Him Who made all things.' Clementianus, the deputy (*uicarius*), said: 'And who is this who made all things?' Gordianus said: 'Christ, the Son of the living God.' Clementianus the deputy said: 'If He made all things, why has He been rejected by the emperor of our State, Lord Julian, the eternal Augustus?' Gordianus said to him: 'Rather Julian is rejected by God, who did not fear God but adores representations of demons, with whom

⁹ The site of the later monastery located *ad Aquas Saluias* ('at the Salvia springs'), now known as the Tre Fontane, was a property granted by Gregory the Great to the church of St Paul on the Via Ostiense, south of Rome. It is first mentioned in the Greek *Acta Petri et Pauli* of pseudo-Marcellus (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum apocrypha*, I, p. 214: εἰς μάσσαν καλουμένην Ἰκοναί Σαλβίας); by the mid-seventh century it had been made available to a community of Greek-speaking monks from Cilicia, who brought with them to Rome the head of the Persian martyr Anastasius (Magundat), who was executed by King Chosroes II in 628. See Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 33–48; U. Broccoli, *L'abbazia delle Tre Fontane. Fasi paleocristiane e altomedievali del complesso 'ad Aquas Salvias' in Roma* (Rome, 1980); Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux*, I, pp. 13–17; and L. Spera, 'Aguas Salvias, massa', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 147–8, as well as *eadem*, 'Aquaе Salviae monasterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 144–7.

¹⁰ On the temple of Tellus, near to which was located the *Secretarium Tellurense*, the site of the offices of the urban prefecture, see no. VII (p. 198, n. 17). In the present case the reference has probably been taken over directly from the *passio* of Pope Stephen (XXVII.12).

he is to perish.' Then Clementianus the deputy said to Gordianus: 'Sacrifice to the eternal gods: if not, I shall have you beheaded.' Gordianus said: 'It will never be well for you, wretch, nor for your emperor, Julian, who is condemned to darkness.' Then, driven by rage, Clementianus ordered him to be beaten with lead-weighted whips; and when Gordianus was being beaten he shouted out in due course: 'I give thanks to Thee, my Lord God Jesus Christ.'

5. Hearing this, the wicked Clementianus ordered him to be beheaded there, in front of the Temple of Tellus. He ordered his body to be cast out in front of the Temple of Pallas,¹¹ in the aforementioned place, so that it would not be buried for five days, but would be left there for the dogs. When the dogs came there, they barked and whined, and did not dare to touch it, but rather kept watch over it. Then one of his household came in the silence of night with other Christians, and they carried off the holy body of St Gordianus the martyr; and coming to the Via which is called Latina, not far from Rome, but at a distance of one mile more or less, they placed it in a crypt, on 10 May, where they had formerly buried Epimachus.¹² In that place their bounties and miracles flourish up to the present day, to the praise and glory of our Lord, Jesus Christ: to Whom is honour and glory, together with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

¹¹ In hagiographical sources, such as the *passio* of Pope Cornelius (VII.1), the temple of Pallas (*templum Palladis*) is conceived as lying in the vicinity of the temple of Tellus; see Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', p. 235, and De Spirito, 'Tellus, Templum (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* V, pp. 25–6, who notes that many scholars have doubted the existence of this *templum Palladis*, notably D. Palombi, *Tra Palatino ed Esquilino: Velia, Carinae, Fagutal. Storia urbana di tre quartieri di Roma antica* (Rome, 1997), pp. 151–8; but see also G. De Spirito, 'Clivus Ursi', *LTUR* V, pp. 238–9, who notes that in the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.19), the body of the martyr Crescentianus is conceived as being thrown *ante clivum Ursi, in platea ante templum Palatii* (v.l. *Palladis*), which presumably refers to a road or pathway (*clivus*) up to the Palatine, and a temple thereon.

¹² For the cemetery of SS. Gordianus and Epimachus, see n. 3.

XXVIII

The Greek Martyrs

c.600 × c.650; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of Pope Marcus (Via Ardeatina)

The *passio* concerns a Greek family—Hadrias and his wife, Paulina, with their children, Maria and Neon—who, together with Hadrias' brother, Hippolytus, come to Rome from Greece, where Hippolytus becomes a monk and lives in the catacombs; during their time in Rome they come into contact with others who are either Christians already or become Christians through their efforts (Eusebius, Marcellus, Maximus), and after their death through martyrdom are commemorated by other Greek relatives (Martana and Valeria) who come to Rome to venerate them.¹

The narrative is as follows. During the consulship of Valerian and Lucillus (= AD 265), the monk Hippolytus was living in Rome in the catacombs, and by his preaching was converting many Christians, who were then baptized by Pope Stephen (254–7); the success of Hippolytus' evangelizing was reported to the consul Valerian by Maximus, the urban prefect, whereupon an edict was issued by the emperor Decius compelling all citizens to sacrifice (c. 1). On hearing of the edict, Pope Stephen addressed the Christian community, asking them to bring forward for baptism any people whom they knew to be pagans; Hippolytus mentioned to him the situation of the Christian, Hadrias, and his still-pagan wife, Paulina (c. 2). Hadrias sent his children, Neon and Maria, to take food to Hippolytus, their uncle; they were met and detained there by Pope Stephen, so that after three days their parents went to find them (c. 3). Hippolytus now begged them to abandon the worship of idols; but Paulina reminded him that during their sea-crossing to Italy they had vowed to sacrifice to Jupiter Maximus on arriving in Rome (c. 4). Pope Stephen then sent Eusebius the priest and Marcellus the deacon to the catacomb to meet

¹ Listed *BHL* 3970 and *CPL* 2209; see discussion by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 179–83; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 143–51; Amore, 'Sulla questione dei cosiddetti martiri greci'; *BSS* V, cols. 272–4 [A. Amore]; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 293–5; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 135–42.

Hadrias and Paulina, together with Neon and Maria, who were all now residing there, and urged them all to undergo baptism (c. 5). Meanwhile the parents of a certain Pontianus, who was seized with paralysis, brought him to Eusebius; when Eusebius baptized the boy, he was cured of the paralysis (c. 6). The miracle performed by Eusebius was sufficient to convince Hadrias and Paulina to undergo baptism, and they were duly questioned and then baptized by Pope Stephen (c. 7). Hadrias and Paulina, with their children, began to live in the catacomb with Hippolytus, Eusebius, and Marcellus; but it was reported to Valerian that these wealthy Christians were feeding the poor from their own resources, whereupon he commissioned Maximus, the prison registrar, to find them; Maximus disguised himself as a poor man and awaited the arrival of Hadrias and the others (c. 8). When they came, Maximus followed them, but was seized by a demon; through the prayers of the Christians, Maximus came to his senses and denounced Valerian, whereupon he was arraigned before Valerian, sentenced to execution, and thrown into the Tiber (c. 9). Valerian now began to search actively for Hadrias, and succeeded in arresting him; Hadrias, his family, Eusebius, Marcellus, and Hippolytus were all brought before the tribunal of Valerian in the Forum of Trajan (c. 10). Valerian interrogated them all and remanded them in custody in the Mamertine prison (c. 11). They were all then brought for trial at the temple of Tellus and, after having refused to sacrifice, were tortured severely; during the torture Paulina expired; Eusebius and Marcellus were beheaded next to the amphitheatre, and then buried in a cemetery at the first mile of the Via Appia, but Hadrias and Hippolytus, and Neon and Maria, were put back in prison (c. 12). The four of them were consigned to Secundianus, Valerian's legal adviser, and taken to his home, where Secundianus hoped to persuade Hadrias to part with his fortune; when they all proved recalcitrant, the children, Neon and Maria, were taken to the 'Stone of Criminals' and executed in the presence of Hadrias and Hippolytus; they were buried by Pope Stephen in the cemetery at the first mile of the Via Appia, where they used to assemble (c. 13). Hadrias and Hippolytus were now taken to the Circus of Flaminius and publicly flogged, and then flogged again on the Antonine Bridge, where they finally gave up the ghost; they were buried in the same cemetery, at the first mile of the Via Appia, where Eusebius, Marcellus and Paulina had been buried (c. 14). Nine months later, their relative, a Greek woman named Martana, came, with her daughter, Valeria, to Rome in order to venerate the martyrs' grave; they died in Rome some thirteen years later (c. 15).

The genesis of this narrative can be understood from two pseudo-Damasan epigrams (*tituli*) which are preserved in their entirety only in the *sylloge* of Tours, but of which a fragment, discovered in 1887 on the Via Cavour, near

the church of S. Maria ai Monti, indicates that they are probably of sixth-century date.² The first concerns a group of pagan Greeks who, during a sea-crossing, vowed to make thank-offerings to Jupiter for their safe passage, but instead were converted to Christianity; these included a monk named Hippolytus, and a man and wife named Hadrias and Paulina:

A pagan group which Greece once sent³
 now shines forth, adorned with the achievements of martyrdom.
 While in the midst of the sea this (group) made a wretched vow,
 to render unspeakable offerings to deadly Jupiter.
 But the faith of Hippolytus, (assisted) by heavenly arms,
 was the first to reject the insane and pestilential plague.⁴
 Hiding in his monk's habit, a catacomb sheltered him,
 (and) provided a sweet dwelling-place for the Christian⁵ flocks.
 Following him, Hadrias is purified in the sacred waters,
 and (then) Paulina, in alliance with her husband. 20 May.⁶

As will be seen, this epigram provided the names of three of the Greek martyrs (Hippolytus, Hadrias, and Paulina), as well as the fact that Hippolytus became a monk and lived in hiding in a catacomb, where he comforted an ever-growing Christian flock (c. 1), and that, during their crossing from Greece to Italy, they had vowed to make a thanks-offering to Jupiter (c. 4). The narrative concerning the two children of Hadrias and Paulina derives from the other epigram in the *sylloge* of Tours:

The daughter Maria, rejoicing together with her dear brother Neon,
 were found worthy to receive the faith.
 Following the precepts of Christ, they liberally distributed
 their personal wealth to the poor.
 Through their excellent instruction and great effort,
 a holy throng made its way to God on high.
 Subsequently, entrusting their souls to Christ by spilling their own blood,
 they were not afraid to die in order to gain (eternal) life.

² De Rossi, 'Frammento d'elogio storico'. The fragment reads '...VM FRATRE NIO.../...ROMER...'; the wording derives from the first two lines of the second epigram quoted below ('Nata Maria simul caro cum fratre Nione / gaudentes sacrum promeruere fidem').

³ The line as preserved in the *sylloge* of Tours (*olim sacrilegam quam misit gracia turbam*) is evidently corrupt. De Rossi (followed by Delehaye) emended *gracia* to *Graecia*, and left it at that. But I do not understand the accusatives, and have emended *sacrilegam...turbam* to *sacrilega...turba* (understanding that the final syllable of *sacrilega* is here lengthened *ob caesuram*); so the emended line reads: 'olim sacrilega quam misit Graecia turba'.

⁴ The transmitted text (*luem*) was emended to *luem* by de Rossi (followed by Delehaye).

⁵ The transmitted text (*Christo colis*) was emended to *Christicolis* by de Rossi (followed by Delehaye).

⁶ Listed ICL 11202; ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, p. 67 [no. 26], and Delehaye, *Acta SS., Nouembris* IV, p. 99.

Their exquisite suffering will now⁷ explain their miracles.
Learn that God is always present for His followers! 9 November.⁸

This epigram not only supplied the names Maria and Neon, who were incorporated by the author of the *passio* as the children of Hadrias and Paulina (cc. 2–3), but prompted the description of the entire group as wealthy benefactors, who used their wealth to feed the poor (c. 8). To this narrative nucleus—a group of five Greek Christians living in a catacomb and distributing food to the Christian poor—the author added Eusebius and Marcellus (a priest and deacon who were necessary to baptize the ever-increasing Christian flock), the magistrate Maximus, whose role was to discover the group and bring them to trial; and Martana and Valeria, whose role as relatives of Hadrias and Paulina was to come to Rome and venerate the martyrs' shrine. And since the two epigrams provided no chronological information, the author decided to situate the events of his narrative in the pontificate of Pope Stephen I (254–7), in spite of the manifest anachronism which this introduced.⁹

The various feast days mentioned in the course of the narrative have no correspondence in martyrological sources. Of the two dates provided by the epigrams—20 May for Hippolytus, Hadrias, and Paulina, 9 November for Maria and Neon—the author of the *passio* rejected that of 20 May, and assigned 9 November to Hadrias and Hippolytus (c. 14) rather than to Maria and Neon. Of the dates given in the *passio*—19 November for Maximus (c. 9), 20 October for Eusebius and Marcellus (c. 12), 27 November for Maria and Neon (c. 13), and 9 November for Hadrias and Hippolytus (c. 14)—not a single one is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.¹⁰ The implication is that the author of the *passio* did not use the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* as a source for martyrs' names (unlike some of his colleagues), and that his *passio* was not in existence when it was first compiled (mid-fifth century), nor when the second recension was compiled in Gaul in the late sixth century.

⁷ The transmitted text here reads *ouem* (*horum virtutes ouem passio lecta docebit*), which is both nonsensical and unmetrical: a bisyllabic word such as *ouem* will not scan in this position. Delehayé emended *ouem* to *quem*, which is metrically acceptable, but (to me at least) incomprehensible. I conjecture *iam* ('now') for *ouem*. Note that I understand *passio* here to refer to the martyrs' suffering, not to a written text.

⁸ Listed ICL 10004; ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, p. 66 [no. 25], and Delehayé, *Acta SS., Nouembris* IV, p. 99.

⁹ For example, the statement that Hippolytus was a monk. There were no monks living in Rome in the third century, and monasticism as a Christian practice did not properly develop until the later fourth century, following the example of St Anthony of Egypt (d. 356).

¹⁰ But note the entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* for 19 June: 'Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via <Appia>, Hippolytus, Valeria, Marcellus' (Appendix III, p. 654). It is unclear whether these names refer to Christians mentioned in the present *passio*, of which they represent a very bizarre selection; in any case, those in the present *passio* are not said to be buried in the cemetery of Callistus.

Several of the Greek martyrs are said by the author of the *passio* to be buried at the first mile of the Via Appia: Eusebius, Marcellus, and Paulina (c. 12), Maria and Neon (c. 13), and Hadrias and Hippolytus (c. 14). The question arises: which was the cemetery in which they were all buried? It used formerly to be thought, from the time of de Rossi onwards, that the cemetery in question was that of Callistus;¹¹ however, this cemetery is at the *second* mile of the Via Appia, not the first, and more recent scholars tend to reject identification with the cemetery of Callistus.¹² Some light on the problem is thrown by a detailed entry in the entry for the 'Porta Appia' in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary': 'and not far away rest the martyrs Hippolytus, Hadrias, Eusebius, Maria, Martana, Paulina, Valeria, Marcellus [i.e. the Greek Martyrs]; and nearby is Pope Marcus in his own church' (Appendix IV (c) [§11], p. 666). In relatively recent times, a previously unknown catacomb was discovered on the Via Ardeatina, in the near vicinity of the Via Appia (the two roads run more or less parallel to each other for the first mile or so as they exit from the Aurelian Walls); this catacomb was constructed as an extension to a large ambulatory basilica which came to light at the same time.¹³ The ambulatory basilica has been convincingly identified as that of Pope Marcus (as mentioned in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary'), who died in 336, and it has been plausibly conjectured by Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai, the doyen of palaeo-Christian archaeologists, that the extension of the cemetery under the ambulatory basilica was the original sanctuary of the 'Greek Martyrs', dating from the late fourth or early fifth century.¹⁴

At a later period, probably in the eighth or ninth century, the remains of the Greek Martyrs were transferred for safety to the intra-urban church of S. Agata dei Goti, for the remains were rediscovered there in 1932.¹⁵ This led Cécile Lanéry to suggest that the present *passio* was composed for the benefit of the church of S. Agata, at the time of the translation at some point in

¹¹ See de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, I, pp. 264–5, and O. Marucchi, 'Riassunto di un recente studio topografico sulla ubicazione del santuario dei Martiri Greci nel cimitero di Callisto', *RACR* 2 (1925), 19–29, and *idem*, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 237–50.

¹² Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 137–8.

¹³ Nestori, *La basilica anonima*, pp. 62–84 (excavation of the venerated crypt) and 115–16 (possible association with the Greek Martyrs); V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Una nuova basilica a deambulatorio nel comprensorio della catacomba di S. Callisto a Roma', in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie*, II, pp. 776–86; *idem*, 'Basilica Marci, coemeterium Marci, basilica coemeterii Balbinae. A proposito della nuova basilica circiforme della via Ardeatina e della funzione funeraria delle chiese "a deambulatorio" del suburbio romano', in Guidobaldi and Guidobaldi, *Ecclesiae urbis*, II, pp. 1175–1201; *idem*, 'S. Marci basilica, ecclesia, coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 25–8; and (briefly) Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese di Roma*, p. 93.

¹⁴ V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'The Origin and Development of Roman Catacombs', in Fiocchi Nicolai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, pp. 9–69, at 55–6, with the accompanying map, 'Early Christian Monuments in Rome and its Suburbs (3rd to 6th Century)', nos. 85–6; and cf. Bonfiglio, *apud* Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 141.

¹⁵ Franchi de' Cavalieri, 'Le reliquie dei martiri greci'.

the eighth or ninth century.¹⁶ However, the entry concerning the Greek Martyrs in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' (quoted above) indicates clearly that the *passio* must have been in existence when the 'Itinerary' was compiled, in the mid- to late seventh century. As we have seen, the individual Greek Martyrs are not recorded in any martyrological source other than the *passio*; and since the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' names all the Greek Martyrs individually, the only possible conclusion is that it was compiled with the *passio* at hand. The *passio* thus takes its place as part of a small group of texts compiled in the first half of the seventh century, including those of Pope Stephen (XXVI), Gordianus and Epimachus (XXVII), and Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX). It is not impossible that some, perhaps all, of these texts are the work of one author.

Text. Unlike many of the *passiones* translated in the present volume, which circulated in hundreds of manuscripts, the *passio* of the Greek Martyrs (BHL 3970) enjoyed very modest circulation, no doubt in part because the individual martyrs were not commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: BHLms lists a mere five manuscript witnesses to the text. The present translation is based on the text edited by Hippolyte Delehaye in *Acta SS., Nouembris* IV [1925], pp. 93–9.

1. During the consulship of Valerian and Lucillus,¹⁷ there was a certain man named Hippolytus, a monk,¹⁸ who lived in the catacombs, serving God in this hidden place; many Christians went to him in order to hear from him the teachings of the apostles. And while this entire throng of Christians was visiting him frequently, the Christian flock grew daily: they had been converted from being pagans and baptized, during the times of the blessed Stephen, bishop of Rome.¹⁹ At this same time the aforementioned Hippolytus threw himself at the feet of the blessed Stephen, and brought to him many of the pagans (converted) by his teaching, and they were baptized. While these things

¹⁶ 'Hagiographie', p. 295.

¹⁷ The consulship of P. Licinius Cornelius Valerianus (II) and Lucillus was in AD 265. Note that this Valerian is not the persecuting emperor Valerian (253–60), who was consul for the fourth and last time in 257. Unfortunately, the author of the present *passio* has confused the consul of 265 with the emperor Valerian, who died in captivity in Persia in 260.

¹⁸ The suggestion of a professed monk during the pontificate of Stephen (254–7) is a blatant anachronism: Christian monks are not attested before the early fourth century, in the aftermath of the 'Great Persecution', when the habit arose among Christians in Egypt to escape from cities to the desert in order to live in accordance with their own concept of Christian belief. There is a vast bibliography on the origins of monasticism; see (briefly) the sensible comments of Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 601–4, and *EEC* I, pp. 566–7 [J. Gribomont]. Monasticism is not attested at Rome before the late fourth century.

¹⁹ Stephen was pope from May 254 to August 257 (*LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 33; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 154; trans. Davis, *LP*, p. 10); and see *EP* I, pp. 281–6 [M. Simonetti]. The *passio* of Pope Stephen is translated above, no. XXVI.

were taking place, and the people of the Lord were growing in faith, it was revealed to Valerian by a certain Maximus, the urban prefect,²⁰ who made the following suggestion to Valerian: 'Most capable (master), friend of peace: it has come to my attention that there is a certain Christian man who is seducing the populace, and nearly half of the people of the city are going to him, and the Capitol is deserted, and the entirety of our temple worship is abandoned.' On hearing this Valerian announced it to the emperor Decius.²¹ Then Decius, filled with joy, said: 'Let us order everyone not to depart from worship at the Capitol, and (compel them) to offer sacrifice to Jupiter.'

2. On hearing this, Hippolytus the monk reported it to St Stephen, the bishop. Then the blessed Stephen, having assembled a throng of Christians, began to instruct them in holy doctrine and knowledge of the scriptures; and he persuaded the pagans, so that they would draw back from worship of their gods, saying: 'My sons, listen to me, a sinner: while we still have time, let us work good for ourselves.'²² And yet I urge that everyone of us must take up his cross and follow our Lord Jesus Christ, Who deigned to say to us: "He who loves his soul shall lose it, and he who will lose his soul (in this life) will find it in eternity."²³ Whence I ask all of you, if any of you has a friend or neighbour who is pagan, let him not delay in bringing him to me so he can be baptized.' Then the blessed Hippolytus threw himself at the feet of the blessed Bishop Stephen, saying, 'Good father, I ask you (this): I have my nephew and his sister who are still pagans, yet they are innocent and young. I brought them up. The one is a young lad, ten years old, more or less, a boy named Neon; the young girl, called Maria, is thirteen. They frequently come to visit me in my hiding-place, sent by their parents, who are my brothers in the flesh; their mother is still a pagan, named Paulina, but their father is a Christian, named Hadrias. In accordance with their wishes I seek to have their souls redeemed.' The blessed Bishop Stephen said: 'And, brother, why do you delay?' Hippolytus replied: 'So that of her own will I may bring to you the mother.' The blessed Stephen said: 'Listen to my advice, therefore, and do this: when they whom you call your nephew (and niece) are sent to you, keep them with you so that, when they are late in returning home, their parents will come to you; and when they come, let us both urge them not to die, but to live in eternity.'

3. After two days had passed, Neon and Maria are sent by their father, Hadrias, to their uncle, Hippolytus, so that they could bring bread and other food to him. And they came to a certain place in the crypt where Neon and Maria were accustomed to visit Hippolytus. Then Hippolytus, embracing

²⁰ There is no record of an urban prefect named Maximus at this time; see Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, p. 245; Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 122–3; and *PLRE* I, pp. 1052–3.

²¹ Decius was emperor from 249 until he was killed at *Abritus*, in Moesia Inferior (Razgrad in modern Bulgaria) in June 251. Once again the author's chronology is preposterous.

²² Galat. 6: 10.

²³ John 12: 25.

them, ran to announce (their arrival) to the blessed Bishop Stephen. St Stephen came and met the children; he held them in an embrace, consoling them at the same time. And when they had kept them there for three days, their parents, hastening there, found them in the company of many Christians. When the blessed Stephen saw them, he embraced them joyously, saying: 'My sons, think of the day of judgement, because this (world) which we see is temporary; but we hope to be redeemed through the water (of baptism) and the Holy Spirit, so that we may enjoy the eternal kingdom. For that reason I urge you to abandon mute and handmade idols, which you well know can be of no use to you, but were fashioned for the destruction of your souls.' After saying this, the blessed Stephen departed.

4. Then Hippolytus said to them: 'My brothers and my nephews: draw back from the deceptions of demons; for you know that I have abandoned the vast wealth of my family, and their banqueting, and I now revel in this, which you see.' Hadrias replied, and said: 'And our children, whom we have brought up together: how can we abandon them without resources and (leave them) poor, so that we may die together in the fury of the sword?' Hippolytus replied: 'Believe that this is not to die, but to be reborn.' Hadrias replied: 'I fear to lose the wealth which we brought here from Greece as foreigners, as well as our children, and our blood.' The wife of Hadrias, Paulina, who was still a pagan, said to Hippolytus, her brother: 'You well know that we did not come to this city except to see the temple of *Iuppiter Invictus* on the Capitol,²⁴ and to sacrifice to our gods. It is enough for you that you have abandoned your own vows: why do you hasten to overturn ours, and to consign our children to death?' Then Hippolytus said to Paulina, the wife of Hadrias: 'Listen to me, wise sister: these earthly possessions are impediments to the eternal life.' Paulina replied: 'Is it therefore an impediment to live in the open, and is it better for us to live in dark and hidden locations in fear and nakedness and starvation?' Hippolytus said to her: 'The Lord God, "Who made heaven and earth and sea, and everything which is in them":²⁵ He promised that what we lose in this world we will gain a hundredfold, and that He will grant us eternal life.'²⁶ Paulina said: 'And what about our vow, which together with our children we promised (while crossing) the sea to pay back on the Capitol?'

²⁴ The temple of 'Iuppiter Invictus' is in fact the temple (*aedes*) of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, the largest temple on the Capitol; see Platner-Ashby, pp. 297–302, who comment: 'This temple was the centre of the religious system of the state during the republic and empire, and possessed great political importance. Here, the consuls offered their first public sacrifices, the senate met in solemn assembly; it was the destination of the triumphal procession, and the repository of archives dealing with foreign relations. To the Romans it was the symbol of the sovereignty and power of Rome, and of her immortality' (p. 302); cf. also Richardson, pp. 221–4, with fig. 19 (p. 69); Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 32–4; and S. De Angeli, 'Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, aedes (fasi tardo-republicane e di età imperiale)', *LTUR* III, pp. 148–53, with figs. 99–102.

²⁵ Acts 4: 24.

²⁶ Cf. Matt. 19: 29.

Hippolytus said: 'Why do you not reflect that the vows, which you mention, we promised together? Yet I have embraced what I saw to be better; and I do not worship stones and mute sculptures, but I recognized the true and living God, to Whom I committed myself, and I was baptized in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and I (now) live and repent of my former ignorance, which I had when I was (living) in a state of unbelief.' Then Hadrias, the husband of Paulina, said to Hippolytus: 'Show me one man who will prove the things you say, and then I shall do what you are urging me to do.'

5. At that same time Hippolytus went to the blessed Stephen; and he related to him everything which had happened. Then the blessed Stephen called to him the learned man, Eusebius the priest, and Marcellus, the deacon, whom he sent to Hadrias and Paulina. And when they arrived, together with Hippolytus, the monk, they entered into a certain catacomb (*arenarius*), and they called forth Maria and Neon, with their parents. As they entered into the catacomb, they encountered Eusebius the priest and Marcellus the deacon and Hippolytus the monk. And when they saw them, they embraced them with great joy, and exchanged kisses of peace. That same hour, the blessed priest Eusebius said to them: 'Christ awaits you, that you may enter with Him into the kingdom of heaven.' Paulina replied, and said to Eusebius the priest: 'And what is the kingdom of heaven? Is the kingdom itself greater than the great treasury and structure of Jupiter on the Capitol?' Eusebius said: 'That which we see, men made, and it will be destroyed. But the kingdom of heaven will not be destroyed, because it was divinely constructed. Gold is not lacking there, silver and precious stones are everlasting there, where the streets are paved with gold without any stumbling block, where the angels are seen and where hunger never holds sway. There is complete sufficiency without corruption; there, delights are celebrated with hymn-singing; there will be light such as the sun and moon never provide, where shadows never occur. The things which we see (here), the buildings of the Capitol, will be destroyed, along with everything else. Believe (in Christ), and I promise you that all these things which I have mentioned, you will obtain through the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.' Hadrias said: 'And what is this belief?' Eusebius said: 'That you not delay in being reborn.' Paulina replied, saying: 'And how can we be reborn, (we) who have produced children and were the parents of many offspring, from which these two are still living, and others we have lost?' Eusebius the priest said: 'My brothers, I say this so that each one of you may be baptized, and cleansed of his individual sins.' And Paulina said: 'Tomorrow, when it grows light, we will give you our answer.'

6. That night, the parents of a certain Pontianus brought their son, who had been seized with paralysis; and they cast him before the feet of Eusebius the priest, asking him that he be baptized, because all his limbs and his tongue were already claimed by the disease. At that same time, the blessed Eusebius,

bending his knees, said to the Lord: 'O Lord, Creator of all things, Who is and Who was, Who has neither beginning nor end, look on the works of Your hands so that everyone may recognize that You are the Lord God of heaven and earth and sea, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit, that this little boy may confess You as his creator, (You) Who reign forever and ever.' And when they all said 'Amen', the little boy got up, who had been lying there mute, and began to shout out, saying: 'Glory be to You, O Lord, Who have saved me!' And then he said: 'I beg you through God: do not delay in baptizing me.' And he baptized him in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and he celebrated mass for him, and they all participated in the body and blood of Christ. And it was reported to the blessed Bishop Stephen, and, giving thanks to God, he came happily and made the sign of the Cross over him.²⁷

7. When it was morning, Hadrias, with Paulina and their children came to the catacomb. And when they saw there many Christians and the blessed Bishop Stephen and the boy, whom the Lord had cured through baptism and prayer, and asked what had happened, they told them everything which had happened. Wondering at the Lord's miracles (as seen) in the healing of the boy, Hadrias and Paulina with their children Neon and Maria threw themselves at the feet of the blessed Bishop Stephen, begging that they be baptized. When he saw this, the blessed Hippolytus, giving thanks to God, said to the blessed Bishop Stephen: 'My lord, do not hesitate to baptize them.' The blessed Bishop Stephen said: 'Let the (baptismal) rites be performed, and let the interrogation proceed, if they truly believe, so that no fear may remain in their hearts about being baptized.' Hippolytus said: 'Blessed father, interrogate them seriously'.²⁸ The blessed Stephen said to them: 'Pay attention, my sons, if you believe with all your heart.' Paulina replied, and said: 'We believe, and we truly believe, because we recognize the salvation of the boy; we beseech you, save our souls!' That same day he imposed on them a fast lasting until the evening, and he catechized all of them, and baptized them in the name of the Trinity. And having made the sign of the Cross over them, he offered the sacrifice (of mass) for them, and they all took part. And the blessed Bishop Stephen departed.

8. Hadrias and Paulina, with their children, Neon and Maria, and the priest, Eusebius, and the deacon, Marcellus, and the monk, Hippolytus, began to live together in that same crypt, and they persevered in prayer and fasting and chanting psalms aloud all day and night. From that day forth, Hadrias and

²⁷ It was necessary for a bishop to confirm the baptism carried out by a deacon or priest; see *DACL* III/2, cols. 2515–44 [P. de Puniet], s.v. 'confirmation'. See also the *passiones* of Pope Marcellus (XX.5) and SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.10).

²⁸ In his survey of early Christian texts containing baptismal questions (including *passiones martyrum* where relevant), Kinzig, 'Zur Geschichte der Tauffragen', does not mention the baptismal questions recorded here.

Paulina, together with their children, began to tend to the poor from their own resources. And while many gave thanks for their alms, it was reported to Valerian, with them saying that 'there are Greeks in this city who seduce the populace, giving them money so that they won't sacrifice to the gods.' On hearing this, Valerian gave orders to search for them throughout the entire city; and whoever found them would receive half of their property. And while the search was being drawn out day by day, after thirty-six days a certain Maximus, the registrar of prisons (*commentariensis*),²⁹ came to Valerian, saying: 'Give me the authority of searching (for them) on condition that, if I find them, I shall receive half of their property.' Then Maximus, having been given the authority, pretended to be a Christian, and a needy one at that; and coming to the altar (*ara*) *Carbonaria* on the Caelian,³⁰ he sat there and, as if begging, began to ask for alms. The blessed Hadrias, when he was circulating among the various places and regions, came to the same place where Maximus was sitting and begging as if he were Christian; and when he observed them passing and distributing money to the needy, Maximus spoke as follows: 'In the name of Christ, in Whom I believe, I ask you that you have mercy on my need.' On seeing him they then said: 'Brother, we see in your appearance that you are nobly born; but if you are in need, come with us.'

9. When he was following them, they came to a certain place; and when they entered the house, Maximus was suddenly seized by a demon, and began to shout out, saying, 'Men of God, I was trying to expose you, and behold, I see an extremely dark fire come over me; pray for me, because I am being tortured by the fire.' At that same hour they all fell to prayer on behalf of Maximus, who was rolling around violently on the ground. Through their prayers and tears Maximus came to his senses. And when Maximus was lifted up from the ground, he began to shout out: 'Let Valerian die, and all his friends, and those who trust in demons; whence I beseech you, blessed souls, that I may receive baptism.' Then as the blessed Stephen was enquiring from him the reason why he had been seized (by the demon), he related to him all the plans of Valerian. That same hour he catechized him in the name of the Trinity, and Maximus began to ask in tears that he be baptized. And when he had been baptized, Maximus began to live with St Stephen, the bishop. After twenty-four days, Maximus, the prison registrar (*commentariensis*), is asked for. And when he could not be found, it was reported to Valerian that he had become a Christian and had been baptized. And when other officials from the secretariat (*scrinium*) had been sent to his house, they found him lying on the floor in prayer;

²⁹ Has the author forgotten that he has already introduced an urban prefect named Maximus (c. 1)? In any case, the *commentariensis* was the official or registrar responsible for keeping records of the custody of prisoners and supervision of a staff of torturers; see no. III (p. 109, n. 47).

³⁰ On the *ara Carbonaria*—which is mentioned uniquely here—see D. Palombi, 'Ara Carbonaria', *LTUR* I, p. 74. The site cannot be identified on the basis of the vague information given here.

and raising him up, they arrested him and took him to Valerian. Valerian spoke to him thus: 'Were you so blinded by (the prospect of) money that you would deceive me with promises?' Maximus replied: 'I was blind hitherto, but now I have seen the light.' Then Valerian said: 'What is "the light"?' Maximus replied: 'To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: because Christ, Who was born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary, is Himself the light.' When he had said this, Valerian ordered that he be thrown off a bridge. The blessed Eusebius, the priest, recovered his body and buried it in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, on 19 November.³¹

10. At that time Valerian began to search with great energy for Hadrias, concerning whom he had heard so much. And it was revealed to him that he was living in a certain garret with his wife and sons and Eusebius the priest, together with Hippolytus the monk. And he sent seventy soldiers and arrested them; he ordered them to be brought to him and placed in public custody. And after ten days Valerian commanded that they be brought to him in person. And they were all brought to him in the Forum of Trajan,³² (where) he ordered that a tribunal be set up for him. On hearing of this Marcellus, the deacon, ran up and thrust himself into the presence of Valerian, saying: 'Why are these friends of the truth being detained by you?' A certain Secundianus, a legal adviser (*togatus*),³³ replied, and said: 'This man is a Christian, just like the others.' Valerian ordered that they be brought in individually. And Eusebius

³¹ On the cemetery of Callistus, one of the largest and most thoroughly studied suburban cemeteries of Rome, see (*inter alia permulta*) Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 183–250; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 208–14; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196–203; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callistus*; and L. Spera, 'Cal(l)isti coemeterium (Via Appia)', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 32–44, with figs. 27–54. The entire second volume of de Rossi's *Roma sotterranea cristiana* is devoted to the cemetery of Callistus. As de Rossi pointed out, there is an epitaph which reads 'LOCVS MAXIMVS' in the cemetery of Callistus, which has been thought to pertain to the present martyr: *Roma sotterranea cristiana* II, p. 180, and III, p. 205.

³² The Forum of Trajan is the latest, largest, and most magnificent of the Roman fora; its magnificence may be appreciated by the substantial ruins in the centre of Rome clustered around the justly-renowned Column of Trajan: see no. XXVII.3 (p. 497, n. 8), where the Forum of Trajan also figures as the scene of a tribunal.

³³ The word *togatus* literally means someone who wears the *toga*. Originally, during the Republic and early Principate, this applied to all Roman citizens; but as the citizenship was extended to all free citizens of the Empire, and as the cost of acquiring a toga went up, it was only the upper or senatorial classes who could afford to wear it (see L. M. Wilson, *The Roman Toga* (Baltimore, 1924)). By the fifth century, therefore, *togatus* had apparently come to refer to someone of the senatorial class, but it also implied someone with legal expertise. For example, Dracontius, who belonged to the clarissimate, described himself as *vir clarissimus et togatus fori* (MGH, AA XIV, p. 148), i.e. that he was an advocate in the forum in Carthage; and Sidonius Apollinaris, in a letter to his friend Serranus (ii. 13), notes that he has been shown a letter from Serranus by one *Marcellinus togatus*, where W. B. Anderson (Loeb edition) translates *Marcellinus togatus* as 'Marcellinus the advocate'. In the present context, Secundianus functions as a legal adviser to the emperor, and I have accordingly translated *togatus* as 'legal adviser'; see also c. 12. The usual term for a legal adviser, however, was *assessor*.

the priest was brought in. He interrogated him, saying: 'And who are you, who are disturbing our city? State your name.' Eusebius replied: 'Eusebius the sinner, a priest.' And Valerian ordered that he be set aside, and Hadrias brought in. And when Hadrias was brought in before him, he interrogated him saying: 'Tell us your name.' Hadrias replied: 'Hadrias, the sinner.' Valerian said: 'It is you whom I have been looking for; you come to us, even though late in the day. Yet tell us by what law you have such an abundance of wealth and such an incalculable pile of money, that you can seduce the populace?' Hadrias replied: 'In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, from the impoverishment and labour of my parents.' Valerian said: 'Therefore, if the inheritance of your parents has been left to you, you ought to use it yourself, not spend it on the subversion of the human race.' Hadrias said: 'I spend it for the well-being of myself and my children, and I use it honestly and without fraud.' Valerian said: 'Do you have children and a wife?' Hadrias replied: 'They are here in chains with me.' Valerian said: 'Let them be brought in.' And Paulina, with her children Neon and Maria, is brought in before Valerian; and Marcellus, the deacon, followed them <together with Hippolytus the monk>.³⁴

11. Valerian said: 'Is this your wife and are these your children?' Hadrias replied: 'They are'. Valerian said: 'Who are these other two?' Hadrias replied: 'This is the blessed Marcellus the deacon, and this is my brother [Hippolytus], an outstanding servant of Christ.' Valerian spoke to Marcellus the deacon and Hippolytus the monk: 'State in your own words the name by which you are known.' Marcellus replied: 'Marcellus, the sinner.' Valerian spoke likewise to Hippolytus: 'And you too, state your name.' Hippolytus said: 'Hippolytus, servant of the servants of Christ.'³⁵ Then Valerian ordered that Paulina and her children be led away, and he said to Hadrias: 'Reveal your treasures, along with those with whom you have been brought in, and sacrifice to the gods, and live; for if you will not sacrifice, you will quickly breathe out your last by losing your life.' Hippolytus replied: 'We have lost silly ideas and found the truth, which we did not deserve.' Valerian said: 'Tell me what was the pretext for this loss.' They all three replied: 'That we should cast away silly and false and mute idols, and should find the Lord of heaven and earth and sea and the abyss, Christ, the Son of God, in Whom we believe.' In a rage Valerian ordered all of them to be remanded once

³⁴ A phrase explaining that Hippolytus was also present appears to have been omitted, because Hippolytus is certainly present to be interrogated by Valerian in the following chapter; perhaps words such as *una cum Hippolyto monacho* have fallen out after *Marcellus diaconus*.

³⁵ The phrase *servus servorum* is biblical in origin (Gen. 9: 25), and appears to have been used first by a bishop to describe himself, in the salutation of a letter by Augustine; Gregory the Great typically styled himself *servus servorum Dei* in the salutations of his letters, and the phrase was used widely by bishops thereafter. For the use of the same phrase by a Christian during interrogation, see the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.4), at p. 400, n. 48.

more in public custody, and not to be separated. And they were led away in chains to the Mamertine prison.³⁶

12. After three days, following consultation with his legal advisers (*togatis*) Secundianus and Probus, they decided that they [the Greek martyrs] should first hand over their money, and then be compelled to sacrifice. And Valerian, after the three days, ordered all kinds of torture to be made ready at night in the temple of Tellus.³⁷ And coming by night to the temple of Tellus, where all kinds of tortures (had been prepared), he ordered that a tribunal be set up for him and his legal advisers in front of the temple of Pallas;³⁸ and that night they were all brought before him, bound in chains, with the exception of the young children, Neon and Maria. And Valerian, sitting (in tribunal) with his legal advisers, ordered them to be brought into his presence, and commanded that all the instruments of torture be shown to them, saying: 'I command that all these instruments of torture be used on you if you will not do what I order.' And Valerian said to Hadrias in a rage: 'Disclose to us your treasures, and live.' Hadrias, with his brothers, replied: 'If you are looking for treasures, you can live.' Valerian replied: 'Place (sacrificial) fire on the altar before Pallas the goddess, so that the incense of sacrifice may burn.' They all mocked Valerian by spitting on them. Secundianus, the legal adviser, replied, and said to Valerian: 'Let them be stripped of their clothing and beaten with staves.' Then that same night Eusebius the priest and Marcellus the deacon and Hippolytus the monk and Hadrias and Paulina were stretched out, and in sight of their children were flogged with staves. That same night, while Paulina was being flogged in the presence of Valerian, she gave up the ghost. On seeing this, Valerian was frightened, and said in a furious voice: 'Raise them up from the ground.' And when they had been raised up, he ordered Eusebius and Marcellus to undergo capital punishment. They were taken to the 'Accursed Stone' (*ad Petram Sceleratam*)³⁹ next to the amphitheatre, at the 'Fountain of Pastor' (*ad lacum Pastoris*),⁴⁰ and Eusebius the priest and Marcellus the

³⁶ The name *custodia Mamertini* is that used in Late Latin texts to describe the *carcer Tullianus*, which was the most famous public prison in Rome; see no. X (p. 266, n. 40).

³⁷ On the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), near to which was located the *Secretarium Tellurense*, the site of the offices of the urban prefecture, see no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

³⁸ In hagiographical sources, such as the *passio* of Pope Cornelius (VII.1), the temple of Pallas (*templum Palladis*) is conceived as lying in the vicinity of the temple of Tellus; see no. XXVII (p. 499, n. 11).

³⁹ On the 'Accursed Stone' (*petra scelerata*), see Delehay, 'L'amphithéâtre Flavien', pp. 230–2, and G. De Spirito, 'Petra Scelerata', *LTUR* IV, pp. 80–1. The name is reminiscent of others in Rome, such as the *Campus sceleratus* (near the Porta Collina, where Vestal Virgins who had broken their vows were buried alive: Platner–Ashby, p. 95), *Vicus sceleratus* (also called the *Clivus urbius*, where Tullia is said to have murdered her father: Platner–Ashby, p. 124), *Porta scelerata*, etc. It is also mentioned in the *passio* of SS. Eusebius and Pontianus (XXIX.11).

⁴⁰ As Delehay noted ('L'amphithéâtre Flavien', p. 230), it has not been possible certainly to identify this *lacus Pastoris*. However, there was a fountain in Regio III known as the *Lacus pastorum*, located south of the Baths of Trajan and east of the Colosseum: see Jordan,

deacon were beheaded there, on 20 October. Their bodies were left for the dogs. But the body of the blessed Paulina was thrown (away), and a certain Hippolytus, coming at night, recovered their bodies and buried them on the Via Appia, in accordance with the instructions of Pope Stephen, at the first mile from the city of Rome, in a catacomb, where they used frequently to assemble.⁴¹ But he [Valerian] ordered Hadrias and Hippolytus (the monk) to be put back in prison, as well as the children of Hadrias, Neon and Maria.

13. After seven days, Valerian commanded Secundianus, his legal adviser, to ask Hadrias for the money. And he ordered that they be entrusted to Secundianus to be beaten up. And Hadrias and his children Neon and Maria, together with Hippolytus, were handed over to Secundianus, the legal adviser. Then Secundianus took them to his own home, and spoke to them in soothing words, saying: 'Hadrias, think of yourself, and do not destroy yourselves and the flowers (which are) your children. Hand over the treasures, and sacrifice, and live, and do not lose your life.' Hadrias and Hippolytus replied, saying: 'We do not have gold and silver, because what we had, we spent on the poor. Yet our "treasures" are our souls, which we do not wish to lose in any way; as for you, do what is commanded of you.' Secundianus said: 'Place the children in front of them, and stretch them out and lash them with whips.' The father shouted out to them: 'Be firm, children!' And while they were being whipped at length, they shouted out nothing except, 'O Christ, help us!' Then he ordered the children to be spared, so that Hadrias and Hippolytus could be tortured. And they shouted out in joy: 'Glory be to God on high!' Then he ordered burning torches to be applied to their sides. But Hippolytus shouted out: 'Do what you are doing,' Secundianus said: 'Sacrifice, and offer your consent by saying "we are doing it".' They said to the children with a cheerful expression, 'Behold, a feast without corruption.' Secundianus the legal adviser said: 'Let them quickly be raised up and let Hippolytus and Hadrias be taken to the 'Accursed Stone' (*ad Petram Sceleratam*); and if they will not agree, let their children be killed in front of them.' And when they had been taken to the 'Stone of Criminals', Neon and Maria were put to death by sword in front of Hadrias and Hippolytus. And they were thrown away in that same place on 27 November. And at night, Pope Stephen recovered their bodies and buried them on the Via Appia, in a cemetery at the first mile from the city of Rome, where they used to assemble.

14. After eight days, Secundianus announced to Valerian everything which had happened, and how he had kept aside Hadrias and Hippolytus. And then Valerian ordered him to seek the treasures more strenuously, and to compel them to sacrifice. At that same time, Secundianus the legal adviser ordered that

Topographie II, p. 119; Platner-Ashby, p. 314; Richardson, p. 232; and D. Palombi, 'Lacus Pastoris / Pastorum', *LTUR* III, pp. 171-2.

⁴¹ For the location of this cemetery, see n. 13.

a tribunal⁴² be set up for him in the Circus of Flaminius,⁴³ and for Hadrias and Hippolytus to be brought to him in chains, with the herald saying: 'Here are the profaners who are destroying the city.' And when they had been brought into his presence, Secundianus ordered a tripod and incense to be placed in front of them. He spoke to them thus: 'Hand over the treasures with which you are leading the entire populace into error.' Hadrias and Hippolytus replied: 'We preach Christ, Who deigned to free us from error, not so that we could kill men, but so that we could give them life.' Secundianus the legal adviser said: 'Now put aside your obstinacy, and do what the emperors command.' The saints replied and said: 'We put aside falsehood, and we are true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Secundianus the legal adviser said: 'And on what terms do you serve Christ, you who are hiding your treasures? For your Christ said that you should renounce treasures and everything else, and serve Him.'⁴⁴ Hadrias and Hippolytus replied: 'We once renounced (them), and we are servants, if however we are deserving, of our Lord Jesus Christ.' At that moment Secundianus ordered that their jaws be smashed at length with lead-weighted whips, as the herald proclaimed, 'Sacrifice to the gods by burning incense.' Hippolytus, covered with blood, was shouting out: 'You wretch, do what you are doing, do not stop.' Secundianus the legal adviser ordered the torturers to spare them. And he said to them: 'Now think of yourselves; observe that I am having mercy on your foolishness; and say what you are to do, so that these great tortures may be alleviated for you.' Hadrias and Hippolytus replied, saying: 'We are prepared to suffer all torments, because we are never going to do what you and your emperor command.' That same hour, so that he would find favour with Valerian, he reported to him what had happened. Valerian issued this order: 'Finish them off while the populace is watching.' And he ordered them to be taken to the Antonine bridge (*Pons Antoninus*),⁴⁵ and to be beaten at length with lead-weighted whips, until they died. And while they were being beaten, they gave up the ghost. And their bodies were left in that same place next to the Lycaonian island.⁴⁶ And a certain Hippolytus, a deacon, came at night and

⁴² A legal adviser did not have the authority to hold a tribunal, and to conduct a criminal trial (*cognitio*), let alone to pass capital sentences.

⁴³ The Circus of Flaminius was located in the southern part of the Campus Martius; part of the arcades on the north side were converted into shops in the location of the present Via delle Botteghe Oscure: see Platner-Ashby, pp. 111–14; Richardson, p. 83; Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 221–2; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 266–8 with figs. 65–6; and esp. A. Viscogliosi, 'Circus Flaminius', *LTUR* I, pp. 269–72, with figs. 155–6. See also (briefly), M. C. Cartocci, 'Circus Flaminius (in fonti agiografiche)', *ibid.* p. 272, with reference to the present passage.

⁴⁴ Cf. Matt. 6: 19 (Secundianus omits to quote the following, more significant, verse: 'But lay up treasures in heaven', etc.) and Luke 14: 33.

⁴⁵ On the Pons Antoninus, which is probably to be identified with the Pons Aurelius (known today as the Ponte Sisto), see Platner-Ashby, pp. 398–9; Richardson, p. 297; and G. De Spirito, 'Pons Antonini', *LTUR* IV, p. 108.

⁴⁶ On the *insula Lycaonia*, the medieval name for the Tiber Island (*Insula Tiberina*), see no. XII (p. 295, n. 31).

recovered their bodies and buried them on the Via Appia, at the first mile from the city of Rome, next to the bodies of the saints, in a catacomb, where they used frequently to meet, on 9 November.

15. After nine months, a certain woman of their family named Martana, a Greek by origin, came to Rome with her very Christian daughter named Valeria—though (she was born) of pagan parents in Greece—looking for them [the Greek martyrs]. And when they heard and realized that all of them had died as martyrs for their faith in Christ, they rejoiced and, filled with great joy, came to the blessed Pope Stephen and threw themselves at his feet, (asking) that he show to them where their bodies had been buried. And when they had found the place, they spent all the days of their life there, persisting in vigils and prayers. And, while spending their days there, they obtained eternal life after thirteen years. For an edict had been promulgated that no one was to dare to buy or sell bread, or to draw water, unless they had first sacrificed.⁴⁷ It was at this time that Martana and her daughter died, and they were buried there on 10 December, rejoicing in the confession of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

⁴⁷ Following the termination of the Valerianic persecution by Gallienus in 260, no persecuting legislation was passed until the First Edict of the Great Persecution (February 303), which included no such law. The wording of the present 'edict' is pure fiction.

XXIX

SS. Eusebius and Pontianus

c.600 × c. 700; relevant to the cemetery of Calepodius (Via Aurelia), and to an unidentified cemetery lying between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis

Although the *passio* is known by the names of two martyrs, it in fact concerns a group of four Christians—Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus—who were living in Rome and were martyred during the reign of Commodus (180–92).¹ As is usual in the genre of epic *passiones*, the preaching and example of the four Christians inspired a concatenation of further conversions and martyrdoms.

The narrative is as follows. The emperor Commodus mounted public games, presented himself in the guise of the god Hercules, and decreed that the populace was to worship Hercules and his father, Jupiter (c. 1). On hearing of this decree, four Christians, named Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus,² ridiculed it, and began publicly to urge people to be baptized (c. 2). A senator named Julius heard their preaching, and asked a priest named Rufinus to baptize him; on hearing of this, Commodus arrested Julius (c. 3). Julius was handed over to the deputy, Vitellius, for trial; when he refused to sacrifice to Hercules and Jupiter, he was beaten to death, and the four Christians buried his body in the cemetery of Calepodius (c. 4). When Vitellius learned of this, he arrested all four of them (c. 5). They were tortured by being raised up on a horse-frame and beaten with staves (c. 6). One of the torturers, named Antonius, saw an angel standing near the victims, and fled secretly to Rufinus, asking to be baptized (c. 7). Vitellius engaged in further unsuccessful argument with Eusebius, with the result that Eusebius' tongue

¹ Listed *BHL* 2742 and *CPL* 2185; discussed by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 233–4; *BSS* V, cols. 275–6 [I. Daniele]; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 295–7; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 234–5 [St Vincent only].

² Note that this Eusebius is not to be confused either with Pope Eusebius (308) or Eusebius the priest (no. XIII); that Vincent is not to be confused with the much better known Vincent of Saragossa; that Peregrinus is not to be confused with other, well-attested saints of that name (of Ancona, Auxerre, and Sicily), and that Pontianus is not to be confused either with Pope Pontianus (230–5) or with the founder of the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense.

was cut out (a Christian named Faustus preserved the tongue as a relic); Antonius remonstrated with Vitellius about the unfair treatment of the four Christians, and was sentenced to capital punishment, which was carried out on the Via Aurelia (c. 8). Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus were remanded in custody; while in prison a blind pagan priest named Lupulus came to them and asked to be baptized (c. 9). Rufinus came to the prison and baptized Lupulus, as well as Simplicius, the prison warder; the body of Antonius was recovered by Rufinus and buried in the cemetery of Calepodius (c. 10). Vitellius reported these events to Commodus, who ordered that the four were to be executed; the executions were carried out at the 'Accursed Stone', and Rufinus retrieved their bodies and buried them in a catacomb at the sixth mile, between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis (c. 11).

The most striking feature of this *passio* is that none of the four principal saints is known from any other martyrological source: they are not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum*, and no surviving epigram of Damasus concerns any of them. The *passio* provides a sequence of calendar dates on which a martyr could be commemorated: Senator Julius on 19 August (c. 4), Antonius the converted torturer on 22 August (c. 8), and Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus on 25 August (c. 11). None of these dates is commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III) or in any of the early sacramentaries (Appendix V). The *passio* also provides details about where the individual martyrs were buried: Julius in the cemetery of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia (c. 4), Antonius in the same cemetery on the Via Aurelia (c. 10), and the four principal martyrs six miles from Rome in a catacomb lying between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis (c. 11). Yet none of these burials is mentioned in any of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries (Appendix IV). What is the explanation for the silence of these martyrological sources? Perhaps the simplest explanation is that the *passio* was composed later than the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, and later even than the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries; that is to say, later than c.650. Cécile Lanéry went so far as to suggest that the *passio* was composed c.865, at the time when Count Girard of Vienne acquired the relics of a number of Roman martyrs for churches in southern Gaul, including Vézelay and Pothières;³ these acquisitions included relics of SS. Eusebius and Pontianus, obtained through the agency of Pope Nicholas I (858–67).⁴ Nevertheless, I hesitate to think that the present *passio* is a Carolingian production: it reveals a striking familiarity with various aspects of late antique Rome, such as the imperial acclamations (c. 1), unusual

³ B. de Gaiffier, 'Un dossier hagiographique réuni pour Girard de Vienne?', *AB* 88 (1970), 285–8. As de Gaiffier points out, the account of the translation to southern Gaul (*BHL* 2747) is transmitted alongside the present *passio* (*BHL* 2742) in at least two (northern French) manuscripts, suggesting a link of some sort.

⁴ 'Hagiographie', p. 296.

topographical features such as the *Vicus Canarius* (c. 2), the terminology of Roman magistracies such as ‘former Master of the Foot’, *exmagister peditum* (c. 4), and above all familiarity with cemeteries such as that of Calepodius on the Via Aurelia, which had passed out of use long before the ninth century. I tend, therefore, to regard the present *passio* as a work of seventh-century date, when memory of the topography and terminology of late antique Roman life was still fresh. But the matter is complex, and deserves further study.

Text. The *passio* of SS. Eusebius and Pontianus enjoyed very modest circulation: *BHLms* lists only fifteen medieval manuscript witnesses. The text was edited in *Acta SS., Augusti V* [1741], pp. 115–16, from five manuscripts, including one in the Archivio di S. Pietro (Vatican),⁵ and a huge passionale from the house of Augustinian canonesses at Böddecken (near Büren in the diocese of Paderborn).⁶

1. During the reign of the wicked Commodus,⁷ it was made known on his orders that, on his birthday, the entire populace was to attend public games; and he announced this in the Curia,⁸ saying that the entire⁹ assembly of the Roman people were to acclaim the mighty Hercules and Jupiter: in this way, that Commodus had dressed himself in a lion skin; and, putting on his headdress,¹⁰ in the spectacle (mounted) in the presence all this assembly, he sat weaving from side to side in front of the golden statue of Jupiter.¹¹ The entire populace shouted out in acclamation, saying: ‘Hercules, protector of the

⁵ As usual in the eighteenth century, the Bollandists did not specify which manuscript in the Archivio di S. Pietro they used. *BHLms* lists five MSS. containing the text of *BHL* 2742 in that depository (MSS. A.3, A.4, A.7, A.8, and A.9).

⁶ On this MS., see H. Moretus, ‘De magno legendario Bodecensi’, *AB* 27 (1908), 257–358, at 314. The volume of this passionale for the month of August, containing the *passio* of SS. Eusebius and Pontianus, has been lost since it was collated by the Bollandists in 1741.

⁷ Commodus was the son of the emperor Marcus Aurelius; he succeeded his father and reigned as emperor from 180 until he was murdered on 31 December 192.

⁸ The Bollandists here print *in curione*, but the correct reading—in *Curia*, referring to the *Curia Iulia* or Roman Senate House—is preserved as a variant in the passionale from Böddecken collated by the Bollandists. On the *Curia Iulia*, one of the most impressive ancient buildings still standing, see Claridge, *Rome*, pp. 70–2; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 57–9; and E. Tortorici, ‘Curia Iulia’, *LTUR* I, pp. 332–4.

⁹ Reading *universus* for the Bollandists’ *universitas*.

¹⁰ Translating *mitra* as ‘headdress’. In Graeco-Roman art, Hercules/Heraclēs is depicted as wearing a lion’s head on his head; but in later representations, the lion’s head appears stylized as a sort of turban. See *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (*LIMC*) IV/2 [1988], s.v. ‘Heraclēs’, pls. 11–15, 17, 39–40, and 60–2 etc. [the lion’s head], and 26–31 [the headdress or turban].

¹¹ We know from the life of Commodus in *SHA* that he wished to identify himself with Hercules, and to be known as *Hercules Romanus* (*SHA*, ‘Commodus Antoninus’, c. 8). The most recognizable attribute of Hercules is his lion skin (taken from the Nemean lion, which he killed as the first of his Twelve Labours), worn over his shoulder, and lion’s head, worn as a sort of headdress. In the charade which Commodus has presented here, he wears the lion skin and headdress to confirm his identification as Hercules; and he sits before the statue of Jupiter to remind the public that, as Hercules, he is the son of Jupiter.

republic, and defender of Roman freedom!¹² This acclamation was repeated seventy-five times.¹³

2. At that same time there were some Christians in a certain place in a street called the *Vicus Canarius*;¹⁴ among them were the religious men Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus, all servants of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ; they had distributed their wealth to the poor, and had given it in order to serve the Lord. When they heard what Commodus had done, they laughed at it, and went preaching to the people all through the City, saying: 'Pay respect to our Lord Jesus Christ, and draw back from this diabolical foolishness, and believe in the God of heaven, the Almighty Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son, our only Lord; and do penance, and be baptized in His name, so that all your sins may be wiped away, so that you do not perish together with Commodus, your (earthly) lord.'

3. A certain senator named Julius,¹⁵ on hearing them preaching this in public, invited them to his house, and, listening intently to their preaching, believed (in Christ); and through their agency began to distribute all his wealth to the poor. And when he had given away everything, he called to him a certain priest named Rufinus, and asked that he be baptized; and having received baptism together with his entire household, he himself began to preach publicly the name of the Lord, and to hand over all his earnings, and distribute it to the poor. When this was reported to Commodus, in a rage he

¹² Omitting *audaciae* which follows *libertatis Romanae* in the Bollandists' text.

¹³ Acclamation was a normal feature of Roman public life (see Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations*, pp. 128–64, and, briefly, Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity*, p. 51). The emperor was greeted at public appearances, especially at games, with rhythmical shouting, sometimes organized. The number of repetitions could be many and tiresome: when, for example, the *Codex Theodosianus* was promulgated in the senate in 438, the senators performed thirty separate chanted acclamations of praise, repeated between ten and twenty-seven times each, in honour of the emperors and the consul and the urban prefect. The life of *Commodus* in *SHA*, cc. 18–19, quotes some eighty negative acclamations chanted by the senate following the murder of the despised Commodus (discussed by Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations*, pp. 131–4); and it was possibly these acclamations which prompted the present discussion. Cf. the numerous acclamations by the senate to Marcus Aurelius recorded in *SHA*, *Verus* c. xiii.

¹⁴ The Bollandists here print *Lannarius*, but record *Canarius* as a variant reading in the *passio* from Böddecken; which is clearly correct. On the *Vicus Canarius*, see Platner–Ashby, p. 571, Richardson, p. 421, and S. Serra, 'Vicus Canarius', *LTUR* V, p. 155. According to the (much later) *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, it was located in the vicinity of the church of S. Giorgio in Velabro, in the area between the Palatine and the Forum Boarium (Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, II, p. 615: 'Vicus Canarius ad S. Georgium, ubi fuit domus Lucilii: est ubi velum aureum'). The *Vicus Canarius* is also mentioned in the *passio* of St Polychronius and others (XVI.15) as a place where Christians congregated secretly; the present reference probably derives from the earlier *passio*.

¹⁵ The existence of a Christian senator in the late second century is almost certainly an anachronism: Eusebius (*HE* vii. 16. 1) could name only one Christian senator in the period before the 260s, at Caesarea, not Rome. On Christians among the senatorial classes in the period before Constantine, see Eck, 'Das Eindringen des Christentums', pp. 387–95, with discussion of the present example at pp. 393–4; and Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 302–3. Cf. XII.4 (a Christian senator named Simplicius).

ordered him to be detained. When he was presented to him, he said to him: 'Julius, how have you managed to go insane, so that you desert our god Jupiter and Hercules, and seek out this pointless insanity?' He replied boldly to him: 'May you perish at the same time as those who tell lies together with you!'

4. At that same time he handed him over to a certain Vitellius, a former Master of the Foot (*exmagistro peditum*),¹⁶ whom he asked that he seek from him [Julius] all his wealth, and compel him to sacrifice to the god Hercules; if he would not consent, and sacrifice, he would not be given the opportunity to live longer. Vitellius, the deputy (*vicarius*),¹⁷ took him [Julius] and had him confined in prison; and after three days he requested that a tribunal be set up for him at the temple of Tellus (*in Tellure*),¹⁸ and that Julius be brought before him. And when he had been brought in, he spoke these words: 'I order that Julius the criminal be brought in naked, bound in chains.' And turning to him, Vitellius said: 'Do you know the commands of our emperors, who ordered that you abandon your obstinacy, and worship and sacrifice to the gods Hercules and Jupiter?' Julius replied frankly, and said: 'Both you and your emperor will perish together.' Vitellius the deputy said: 'In whom do you trust, you who are already condemned?' Julius replied: 'In our Lord Jesus Christ, Who condemns you and your emperors to eternal death.' On hearing this, Vitellius ordered him to be beaten with staves; as he was being beaten, he gave up the ghost. He ordered that his body be cast out near the amphitheatre. But at night Eusebius, Pontianus, Peregrinus, and Vincent recovered his body and buried it in the cemetery of Calepodius,¹⁹ on 19 August.²⁰

¹⁶ The *magister peditum* was the supreme commander of the infantry of the Roman field armies, the *comitatenses* (excepting only the cavalry units— *vexillationes* and *alae*—which were under the command of the *magister equitum*); see, in general, Jones, *LRE*, pp. 372–3, 375–7, and 608–9. The *magister peditum praesentalis* had under his disposition all the *comites rei militaris* who commanded regional regiments of the field army, and all the *duces* of provinces with their *limitanei* (p. 376). Note, however, that the post of *magister peditum* (and *equitum*) was created by Constantine (*LRE*, p. 608); it is therefore a glaring anachronism in the present text to imply that such an officer existed during the principate of Commodus.

¹⁷ The career of Vitellius: he had formerly been *magister peditum*; now he is 'deputy' (*vicarius*). In this case Vitellius is evidently the 'deputy' of the urban prefect, inasmuch as he holds his tribunal at the temple of Tellus (c. 4), which was located near to the offices (*secretarium*) of the urban prefecture (see following note).

¹⁸ On the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*), near to which was located the *Secretarium Tellurense*, the site of tribunals and the *scrinia* of the urban prefecture, see no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

¹⁹ On the cemetery of Calepodius, see the earlier studies by Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 75, and Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 188–9; but earlier knowledge of the cemetery was transformed by the excavations of Aldo Nestori, 'La catacomba di Calepodio', and *idem*, 'Ultimi lavori a Calepodio', *RACr* 61 (1985), 237–53; and see also the more recent assessments of Nestori's discovery by Verrando, 'Analisi topografica degli antichi cimiteri', pp. 333–41; *idem*, 'Cal(l)isti coemeterium (via Aurelia)', *LTUR. Suburbium II*, pp. 44–50; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 237–9; A. Granelli, 'Osservazioni sulla regione primitiva del cimitero di Calepodio', in Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, *Origine delle catacombe romane*, pp. 237–57; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 276–83. Pope Callistus was buried in the cemetery of Calepodius; see above, XII.6.

²⁰ There is no commemoration of a martyr named Julius against this date in any martyrological source. Here and at the end of c. 8 the text printed by the Bollandists adds *per Jesum*

5. Vitellius, hearing at that same moment that Eusebius, Pontianus, Peregrius, and Vincent had recovered the body of the blessed Julius, ordered that they be arrested and brought into his presence. And when they had been brought in, he said to them: 'You seized the property of Julius, since it is known that you have recovered his body.' Eusebius replied: 'We did this, and we were worthy to do so.' Vitellius said: 'Were you truly worthy to seize someone else's treasures, and carry off property which was not entrusted to you? Hand over the property of Julius, so that you don't die as he died.' Eusebius replied, saying: 'This is what we wish.' Vitellius said: 'Hand over the property of Julius, and sacrifice to the gods.' Vincent replied, and said: 'They are not gods, but demons, who are to be tortured with you in eternity.'

6. At that moment he gave the order that they were to be raised up face to face on the horse-frame,²¹ and beaten with staves, with the voice of the herald saying, 'Do not blaspheme the gods and the emperors.'²² And Vitellius ordered the beatings to stop, and said: 'Spare yourselves, and sacrifice to the gods.' Eusebius replied: 'You wretch, do what you are doing, do not stop; because if you hope to separate us from the companionship of our lord Julius, you are wasting your time.' Vitellius said: 'These (men) trust in magic, such that they can rejoice in torture.' Vincent said: 'We do indeed rejoice, and exult in our Lord Jesus Christ.' But he, filled with rage, ordered that torches be applied to their sides; but they said in a clear voice: 'Glory be to You, Lord, Who are with us.'

7. One of the torturers saw with his own eyes a young man standing there with a sponge, wiping their sides, and he began to shout out in a clear voice: 'Christ is truly God, Whom these (men) are preaching. For I see an angel standing there, bathing them.' Vitellius replied with a shout, saying: 'O you seducers! O magic art! You have seduced a distinguished man, a man in good standing with the state.'²³ At that same moment the torturer, named Antonius, believed (in Christ); and he fled secretly to Rufinus the priest. Rufinus, taking him in, baptized him in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

8. Then Vitellius took them down from the horse-frame, and said to them: 'Why are you being cruel to yourselves, and (why) do you not put aside this

Christum Dominum nostrum. I have not translated these words here, because they are a later addition, made when the text of the *passio* was adapted for liturgical lessons, the words *per Jesum Christum* etc. signalling the end of a lesson.

²¹ On the 'horse-frame' (*equuleus*), which had the approximate shape of a modern sawhorse, see Gallonio, *Tortures and Torments*, pp. 38–70, with fig. 11.

²² It is odd that the herald's proclamation specifies 'emperors' (plural)—the Latin here reads *principes*—given that the *passio* is set in the principate of the very singular emperor, Commodus. Possibly the plural is intended to imply the present emperor as well as all his predecessors.

²³ The text states that the torturer was a *homo clarissimus*; but it is highly unlikely that a lowly torturer (in the employ of the *commentariensis* of the urban prefecture) would have been a senator of clarissimate rank; I have accordingly translated *homo clarissimus* as 'a distinguished man'.

false insanity, and worship the gods with sacrifices, and live?' Vincent replied: 'You wretch, you are the cruel one, because you are not sparing yourself, and you call us "cruel".' Vitellius said: 'How?' 'Because you abandon the God of heaven and earth, and you seek perpetual death—both you and all those who are involved in this criminal trial (*condemnatio*).'²⁴ Vitellius said: 'Is it I who seek perpetual death, or you, who are suffering these torments?' Eusebius said: 'We are established in glory, but you are being condemned, along with your leader, the devil, with whom you are to perish in eternal hell.' Enraged, Vitellius ordered his tongue to be cut out. And with the tongue removed from the mouth of the blessed Eusebius, behold, Antonius ran up and shouted, 'Poor Vitellius, what are you doing to these holy men?' Then Vitellius began to vomit blood from his mouth. Eusebius shouted out—without his tongue—in a clear voice: 'Glory be to You, Lord Jesus Christ, Who have deigned to enlist me with Your servants to Your (greater) glory!' At that very moment a Christian named Faustus retrieved the tongue of the blessed Eusebius, and put it in his tunic, and ran off. At that same time Vitellius ordered Antonius to undergo capital punishment; he was taken to the Via Aurelia, next to the aqueduct of Trajan,²⁵ and beheaded on 22 August.

9. He ordered the blessed Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus, (all) thoroughly lacerated with wounds, to be locked up in prison. But, once locked up, they began by day and night to give thanks to God in their hymns; many Christians came to them and were comforted by them. After three days the blessed Julius visited them, as if in the body, and said to them as they gazed on him: 'Save the prison warder.' And thereafter blind and infirm people were brought to the blessed martyrs, and were healed through their prayers. A certain blind (pagan) priest of the Capitol²⁶ came to them and asked if he

²⁴ The use of the word *condemnatio* ('a sentence of punishment', 'condemnation') implies that, in the author's (and the martyrs') minds, the outcome of the trial is a foregone conclusion; the appropriate word here would have been *cognitio*, 'criminal trial'. There is no attestation of *condemnatio* meaning simply 'criminal trial' recorded in *TLL* IV, cols. 122–3.

²⁵ The 'aqueduct of Trajan' (*aqua Traiana*) was built in AD 109 to bring water from the Lago Bracciano (*Lacus Sabatinus*) north of Rome to a large receiving tank (*castellum*) on the Via Aurelia, just inside the Aurelian Wall; parts of it are still visible next to the Via Aurelia Antica, at the Villa Doria Pamphili; see Platner–Ashby, p. 28; Richardson, pp. 18–19; Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, pp. 299–307; H. Bloch, 'Aqua Traiana', *American Journal of Archaeology* 48 (1944), 337–41; P. Virgili, 'Aqua Traiana', *LTUR* I, pp. 70–2, with *addendum* at V, p. 226 [C. Bruun]; Z. Mara, 'Traina Aqua', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 177–9, with figs. 125–6; and H. Dodge, '“Greater than the Pyramids”: the Water Supply of Ancient Rome', in Coulston and Dodge, *Ancient Rome*, pp. 166–209, at 179–80. It is also mentioned in the *passio* of SS. Processus and Martinianus (XIX.9).

²⁶ Lupulus was a priest at the temple of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol, the largest temple on the capital and one of the principal temples of Rome; see Platner–Ashby, pp. 297–302, who comment: 'This temple was the centre of the religious system of the state during the republic and empire, and possessed great political importance. Here the consuls offered their first public sacrifices, the senate met in solemn assembly; it was the destination of the triumphal procession, and the repository of archives dealing with foreign relations. To the Romans it was the symbol of

could be baptized. They said to him: 'If you believe with all your heart, you will both regain your sight and enjoy eternal life.' The (pagan) priest Lupulus replied, and said: 'I do believe, and for that reason I came to you, and I even wish to be remanded with you in chains.'

10. Then they asked St Rufinus to come to them. When he came to the prison he asked the blind (priest) Lupulus 'whether you believe with all your heart'. He shouted out, saying: 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, Whom I saw even the demons confessing during sacrifices'; and he catechized him, and, blessing the water, placed him in a basin and baptized him. He said to him: 'Do you believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?'²⁷ Lupulus replied to him: 'I believe, my lord.' And he said: 'If you believe, let what you wish for come to be.' Then he shouted out in a clear voice: 'I believe; enlighten me, O Lord Jesus Christ.' But as this man was shouting out, the prison warder ran up, and saw Lupulus, who had been blind for four years, regaining his sight; and he threw himself at the feet of the saints, (asking) that he be baptized. In that same hour the blessed Rufinus baptized (the warder) whose name was Simplicius. At that time, too, Simplicius, after his baptism, declared where the body of the martyr Antonius was lying. After six days the body was found intact and unharmed; the blessed Rufinus, the priest, took it and buried it on the eighth day²⁸ in a crypt in the cemetery of Calepodius.

11. Vitellius reported all these events involving the saints to the emperor, Commodus, and (told him) how Eusebius was speaking without a tongue. He gave him the order: 'Exterminate them!' That same day he [Vitellius] ordered a tribunal to be set up for him in the temple of Tellus,²⁹ and for Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus to be brought to him; they were brought in, with the herald announcing them. Vitellius said: 'Let the guilty (parties) be brought in'. As they came into his presence, Vitellius said: 'Bring in a tripod, so that they may sacrifice.' But they mocked it by spitting on it. Eusebius said: 'O you wretch, whose heart is filled with the devil.' At that moment he passed sentence, saying: 'Let them breathe out their last before the amphitheatre, by being beaten with lead-weighted whips.' They were taken to the 'Accursed Stone' (*ad Petram Sceleratam*)³⁰ and were killed with lead-weighted whips, as the herald announced (their sentence). The blessed Rufinus recovered their bodies—(those) of Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrinus, and Pontianus—and buried

the sovereignty and power of Rome, and of her immortality' (p. 302); cf. also Richardson, pp. 221–4, with fig. 19 (p. 69); Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 32–4; and S. De Angeli, 'Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, aedes (fasi tardo-republicane e di età imperiale)', *LTUR* III, pp. 148–53, with figs. 99–102.

²⁷ The baptismal questions in this *passio* are not listed by Kinzig, 'Tauffragen'.

²⁸ That is to say, on the eighth day following his martyrdom.

²⁹ See n. 18.

³⁰ On the 'Accursed Stone' (*Petra Scelerata*), see no. XXVIII.12–13 (p. 513 and n. 39).

them in a catacomb not far from the city of Rome, at the sixth mile, at a place between the Via Aurelia and the Via Triumphalis,³¹ on 25 August.³² A certain matron took them in a two-wheeled cart to that place, where their prayers reap benefits up to the present day, to the praise and glory of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and reigns now and always, forever and ever. Amen.

³¹ The site of the burial of the four martyrs, and the catacomb in which they were buried, have never been identified. The problem is partly that their burial is not mentioned in any of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries; furthermore, the statement in the present *passio* is frustratingly vague: the area between the Via Aurelia and the Via Trionfale is huge, amounting to virtually the entire north-west sector of the Roman campagna. A century ago, Dufourcq suggested that the catacomb in question might be that discovered in 1674 by Domenico Ricciardi on Monte Mario, or perhaps that noted by Giuseppe Marchi on the line which runs from the Vatican to the Via Aurelia; but these are merely conjectures (*Gesta*, I, p. 234). There is no recognizable archaeological feature on the Via Trionfale between the fifth and the ninth mile: see M. Maiuro, 'Triumphalis Via', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 202–7; and no cemetery is recorded in the vicinity of the sixth mile of the Via Aurelia: see P. Ciancio Rossetto, 'Aurelia Via', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 170–86, at 184 ('Da Val Cannuta a Malagrotta').

³² There is no commemoration of these martyrs against this date in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, nor indeed in any martyrological source.

XXX

Pope Urban

c.650 × c.700; relevant to the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia); the *domus Marmeniae* at ‘the Columns’ (Via Appia); and the ‘Crypt of St Caecilia’ in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia)

Pope Urban (222–30), who also figures significantly in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV.5–7, 31–2), is treated in the present *passio* as the important focal point of a community of Christians and converts.¹ As usual in epic *passiones*, the central figure becomes involved with a large number of Christians, including his own clergy and a number of converts, all of whom end up being crowned with martyrdom.

The *passio* may be summarized as follows. The pontificate of Pope Urban is described, including the fact that he was instrumental in converting Valerian, the husband of St Caecilia, and his brother, Tiburtius (c. 1). The period of his pontificate was anticipated by the principates of Macrinus and Elagabalus, both of which are briefly described (c. 2). But since Urban’s pontificate fell during the principate of Alexander Severus, that principate is accordingly described at some length (cc. 3–5). During the principate of Alexander Severus, the urban prefect at Rome was Turcius Almachius, who—in spite of the emperor’s toleration of Christians—instituted a cruel persecution (c. 6 [1]). The prefect’s deputy, Carpasius, discovered a number of Christians living in a catacomb (c. 7 [1]). Among the Christians was Pope Urban, who was duly arrested with his clergy and taken to Turcius Almachius at the palace of Vespasian (c. 8 [1]). On entering the prefect’s presence, Pope Urban immediately denounced the gods of the pagans, whereupon he and his clergy were remanded in custody in the district next to the temple of Jupiter (c. 9 [1]). Pope Urban’s Christian community express a paean of praise for their bishop (c. 10). Anolinus, the prison warder, accepts a bribe and allows the Christians to visit Pope Urban in his cell, where he offers them words of consolation (c. 11 [2]). Urban is then brought before Almachius, with whom he has an

¹ The *passio* is listed *BHL* 8372 and 8374–6 (for the individual redactions to which these *BHL* numbers refer, see below) and *CPL* 2247; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 176–7; *BSS* XII, cols. 837–40 [A. Amore]; and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 297–8.

inconclusive discussion about Christian belief, and the case of St Caecilia and her husband and brother-in-law (c. 12 [3]). Almachius next interrogates John and Mamilianus, priests belonging to Pope Urban's clergy; after being tortured, they were taken by Carpasius back to prison with Urban (c. 13 [4]). Various Christians visited them during the night, and spent the night in hymns and prayers; the effect of their prayers was that Anolinus, the prison warder, asked to be baptized (c. 14 [5]). They were then taken back to Almachius in tribunal; Almachius first passed sentence on Anolinus, who was taken to the temple of Diana and decapitated (c. 15 [6]). Pope Urban and his clergy were taken by Carpasius to the temple of Jupiter next to the *Pagus* and ordered to sacrifice; which they refused to do (c. 16 [7]). Carpasius took them back to Almachius, who was persuaded to accompany them back again to the *Pagus*, where they were ordered once again to sacrifice; Urban uttered a prayer, and all the pagan priests who attended the shrine fell down dead [c. 17 [8]]. At that point Almachius retreated to the Palace of Vespasian, and ordered Pope Urban and his clergy to be brought once again before his tribunal; this time they were severely flogged and one of the deacons, named Lucian, gave up the ghost, and was later buried secretly in the cemetery of Praetextatus (c. 18 [9]). Three days later Urban and the remainder of his clergy were taken to the temple of Diana and ordered to sacrifice; when they refused, they were beheaded, and their bodies were later buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus (c. 19 [10]). Carpasius then left the scene of the execution in order to offer incense to the gods, but was seized by a demon, and after shouting out his remorse at having killed so many Christians, was choked to death by the demon (c. 20 [11]). When Marmenia, the wife of Carpasius, heard what had happened to him, she went with her daughter, Lucinia, to the priests Fortunatus and Justinus, and asked to be baptized; she and the entire household of the late Carpasius were duly baptized (c. 21 [12]). Marmenia then made enquiries about the bodies of Pope Urban and his clergy, and decided to translate them from the cemetery of Praetextatus to a more fitting sanctuary at her own suburban residence, which was located at the Columns, just outside the Palace of Vespasian; a large crypt was excavated and the saints were duly interred in it (c. 22 [13]). These events were reported to Almachius, who summoned Marmenia to him, and interrogated her as to why she had become a Christian; she defended her Christianity vigorously, and was then remanded in custody (c. 23 [14]). When Lucinia heard that her mother had behaved with constancy, she began to sell off the family property; as a result of this action, she and the entire household of Marmenia were arrested and brought before Almachius (c. 24 [15]). Almachius ordered his executioner to take them to the temple of Mars and, if they would not sacrifice, they were to be executed; they duly refused, and twenty-two persons, in addition to Marmenia and Lucinia, were executed (c. 25 [16]). On learning of Marmenia's execution, an old priest named Savinus, who had been in prison for twelve years, gave up the ghost; his

body was dragged publicly through the streets and abandoned in the Forum, where it was later recovered by Christians and buried (c. 26 [17]). In a rage, Almachius asked for informers to betray the presence of Christians; he learned of a community of forty-two Christians, and sent his deputy Annitius to deal with them; they were all executed, and subsequently buried in the crypt where St Caecilia had been buried (c. 27 [18]).

It will be clear from this summary that the *passio* of Pope Urban, although it is tiresomely verbose, nevertheless contains much valuable topographical detail concerning suburban Rome, and reveals its author as well read in late antique historical sources. The first chapter of the *passio* treats the pontificate of Pope Urban. The information was all taken directly from the *Liber pontificalis*: the statements that his father was named Pontianus; that he commissioned many silver vessels for liturgical use and provided twenty-five silver patens for his churches; that he converted many to belief in Christ, including Valerian, the husband of St Caecilia, and his brother, Tiburtius (this information was taken by the compiler of the *Liber pontificalis* from Arnobius the Younger's *passio* of St Caecilia: no. IV); that he conducted five December ordinations, and consecrated nineteen priests and nine deacons, and established eight bishops in various places.² So closely does the author of the *passio* adhere to the *Liber pontificalis* that it is possible to determine which recension of the work he had before him. It is well established that the *Liber pontificalis* was issued in two distinct recensions, of which the earliest was produced c.530. This first recension does not survive intact, but is known through two epitomes, known respectively as the *Epitome Felicianiana* (F) and the *Epitome Cononiana* (K).³ The second recension was issued within a decade or so of the first, probably in the 540s (it ends in the middle of the biography of Pope Silverius (536–7)). (The work was henceforth carried on by various continuators.) It is this second recension which circulated most widely and by which the *Liber pontificalis* is best known (it forms the basis, for example, of the translation by Raymond Davis in TTH). Of these various versions, it is evident that the author of the *passio* of Pope Urban was drawing on the earliest recension, of c.530, and that the text before him more nearly resembled the *Epitome Felicianiana* than it did the *Epitome Cononiana*. This much is clear from two examples. First, the author of the *passio* states simply that, before his election, Urban was a 'credible confessor' (*probabilis fuit confessor*). The second recension of the *Liber pontificalis* states—absurdly—that he was 'a confessor in the days of Diocletian' (*hic vero confessor extitit temporibus Diocletiani*); and the *Epitome Cononiana* of the first recension contains the same absurd statement (*Qui etiam claruit confessor temporibus Diocletiani*).

² *LP*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 22–3; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 143; trans. Davis, pp. 9–10.

³ The epitomes are printed in separate columns by Mommsen, and are given in abbreviated translation by Davis, pp. 107–14 (Appendix 3).

Only the *Epitome Felicianae* of the first recension omits the absurd statement that he lived in the time of Diocletian, and states simply, *Hic vero confessor*, etc.⁴ By the same token, the author of the *passio* states explicitly that Anteros succeeded Urban: 'The venerable Anteros, who was Greek by birth, succeeded him in the bishopric' ('cui successit in episcopatu uenerabilis Antheros natione graecus'). In the second recension of the *Liber pontificalis*, and in the *Epitome Cononiana* of the first, the biography of Pontianus follows that of Urban (and Anteros then follows Pontianus). Only in the *Epitome Felicianae* does the biography of Anteros follow directly on that of Urban.⁵ In other words, the author of the *passio* was clearly drawing on the first recension of the *Liber pontificalis* in a version which resembled the *Epitome Felicianae* more nearly than the *Epitome Cononiana*.

The following four chapters (cc. 2–5) of the *passio* attempt to place the pontificate of Urban in its historical context. For this purpose the author drew on a number of sources of third-century imperial history, most notably the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, including the biographies of 'Opilius Macrinus' and his sons 'Antoninus Diadumenianus', 'Antoninus Elagabalus', and 'Alexander Severus', especially the latter.⁶ But he amplified the accounts found in this source with details drawn from other historical sources such as (probably) Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* (or perhaps Aurelius Victor's lost source, the so-called 'Kaisergeschichte') for the detail of the preparations made by Alexander Severus for his war against the Persians, and Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (in the Latin translation of Rufinus: CPG 3495), for the detail that Mamaea, the mother of Alexander Severus, was a Christian, who had received instruction from Origen. But, as usual in these *passiones* of Roman martyrs, the information taken from identifiable—if not always reliable, as in the case of the *SHA*—sources, is jumbled up with much historical nonsense, such as the statement in c. 3 that Elagabalus died in the year 975 A.U.C., which in his reckoning corresponds to AD 230. In fact, Elagabalus did die in the year 975 A.U.C., but that reckoning A.U.C. corresponds to AD 222, not 230 (which would be A.U.C. 983). The author then compounds his error by stating that this year (A.U.C. 975) fell in the sixth indiction. Indictions were devised by Diocletian as a way of exerting greater control over tax-gathering, and are not recorded before AD 313; so the author's statement is a gross anachronism. Nevertheless, it must be said that, of

⁴ See the readings of the various witnesses, set out in parallel columns, in Mommsen's edition, p. 22.

⁵ See *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 24 (*apparatus criticus*), and Davis, p. 108.

⁶ The author's direct use of *SHA* is confirmed by various distinctive details, such as his reference to Elagabalus in c. 2 as the 'Dragged One' (reading *Tractaticius* in lieu of the corrupt and meaningless *tractoricus* in the text of Mombricitus) and the 'Tiberine', because after his death his corpse was dragged around the Circus Maximus—an indignity inflicted on no other emperor—and then thrown into the Tiber (*SHA*, 'Antoninus Elagabalus', xvii. 4–7).

all authors of these *passiones*, the author of the present work made the most concerted effort to situate his protagonist in a plausible historical context.

With c. 6, the author moves from (pseudo-)history to hagiography, so that the narrative henceforth becomes the usual string of conversions, baptisms, arrests, trials, and executions. The author drew his inspiration, and much of his detail, from the *passio* of St Caecilia by Arnobius the Younger (no. IV), but made only a half-hearted attempt to reconcile his historical introduction with his hagiographical sequel. For example, he knew from the *Liber pontificalis* that Pope Urban was regarded as a 'confessor' of the Church ('Hic vero confessor extitit...'), which is to say that he was not a martyr. In order to accommodate this unwelcome fact with his narrative of Urban's martyrdom, he was obliged to alter the statement found in the *Liber pontificalis*. This he did by stating that Urban was a confessor *before his election to the papacy* ('Hic ante episcopatum probabilis fuit confessor'), the implication being that he thereafter became a martyr in the true sense of the word. But in other respects, his attempts at reconciliation of conflicting items of evidence was unsuccessful. The character of Turcius Almachius, the vicious persecutor of Christians who, as urban prefect, dominates the *passio* of Pope Urban, was taken from the earlier *passio* of St Caecilia. But it is improbable that an urban prefect could have mounted a violent persecution of Christians against the wishes of an emperor such as Alexander Severus who, according to c. 5 of the *passio*, was compelled by his mother, Mamaea, a Christian, 'not to unleash the fury of persecution on Christians during his lifetime'. Such an emperor would scarcely have allowed his urban prefect to persecute Christians against his own wishes. But when the author moved into the realm of hagiography, the historical context which he carefully reconstructed in cc. 1–5 was quickly forgotten.

Pope Urban is not commemorated as a martyr in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I), and is not commemorated by an epigram of Damasus. However, in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, his death (*natale*) is commemorated on 25 May, the same date as given in the present *passio* (c. 19 [10]): '<Rome>, in the cemetery of Praetextatus, the death of Pope Urban' (Appendix III, p. 653). This entry confirms the information given in the *passio*, namely that he was first buried with his companions 'in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the Via Appia' (c. 19 [10]). The implication is that this commemoration was entered in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* before the translation of Urban's remains to the *domus Marmeniae*, as described in the present *passio* (c. 22 [13]). This suggests a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *passio* of either 430 × 450 (first, Aquileian, recension of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*) or at latest 592 (second, Gaulish, recension). By the same token, Urban's burial in the *Spelunca Magna* in the cemetery of Praetextatus is mentioned in the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, the earliest of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, dating probably from the pontificate of Honorius (625–38)

(Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661), and is mentioned again in *De locis sanctis martyrum* (Appendix IV (b) [§6]) and the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' (Appendix IV (c) [§11]). This much implies, once again, that the translation to the *domus Marmeniae*—if it is not simply a fiction concocted by the author of the *passio*—must have taken place after the composition of the pilgrim itineraries (mid-seventh century). The implication is that the present *passio* cannot have been composed before that date either. Cécile Lanéry has suggested that it is a much later composition, dating from the Carolingian period (i.e. from the ninth century).⁷

Nevertheless, there are grounds for thinking that a Carolingian dating may be too late. Lucrezia Spera has shown in a number of detailed studies (cited below in notes to the text) that the author had intimate familiarity with the topography of the Via Appia, a fact which inclined her to date the *passio*, following earlier arguments by Agostino Amore, to the fifth or sixth century.⁸ A date this early is probably ruled out by the silence of the seventh-century itineraries on the matter of the translation to the *domus Marmeniae*. But the author's topographical knowledge, taken in combination with his knowledge of texts such as the first recension of the *Liber pontificalis* (c.530) and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*—neither of which can have been widely available as late as the ninth century—suggests that the composition of the *passio* of Pope Urban is to be placed in the later seventh century, in a period after the compilation of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries. In any case, the dating of the *passio* is a problem requiring further attention.

A final point concerning the composition of the *passio*. At one point the author directly addresses an audience which he describes as his 'brothers' (*fratres*) (c. 27 [18]); and this address, taken in combination with his verbatim quotation of an antiphon from the Gregorian Office antiphoner (in c. 11 [2]), implies that he was a monk. As we have seen, Arnobius the Younger composed his *passiones* of St Sebastian (no. III) and of St Caecilia (no. IV) while living among a community of monks at the monastery of S. Sebastiano, on the Via Appia.⁹ If the author of the *passio* of St Urban was a monk at the same monastery, he would certainly have had access to a copy of Arnobius' *passio* of St Caecilia, which he laid heavily under contribution, and would certainly have

⁷ 'Hagiographies', p. 297: 'il se présente plutôt comme une composition carolingienne'. She suggests that it was composed at the time when Urban's relics were translated *intra muros*, along with the remains of many other saints, by Pope Paschal I (817–24), and placed under the altar in the church of S. Prassede: see *LP*, ed. Duchesne, II, p. 56; Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 10–11, with n. 23.

⁸ See Amore in *BSS* XII, col. 837, and Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 283–5, as well as nn. 35, 38, 50, 60 and 62.

⁹ On the monastery of S. Sebastiano, which was the earliest monastery in Rome, founded by Pope Sixtus III (432–40), see no. III, p. 93 with n. 11, as well as Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 163–5.

been familiar with the monuments at the second and third miles of the Via Appia, which are described in detail in the *passio* and which lay less than a mile beyond the monastery of S. Sebastiano. But this can be no more than a hypothesis.

Text. The transmissional history of the *passio* of Pope Urban is unusually complex. In effect, the surviving manuscripts (and printed texts) present two separate redactions, which appear to derive independently from the (lost but reconstructible) original. For sake of convenience, I refer to these two recensions as A and B. Because they are *independent* witnesses to the original, they need to be considered in combination in order to form some notion of the content of the lost original. The text of the *passio* which is translated here is my reconstruction, based on the two independent redactions.

Redaction A is listed as *BHL* 8376 and was printed by Mombritius (II, pp. 644–6).¹⁰ It treats the historical circumstances of Urban's pontificate at considerable length, providing detailed treatment of the principates of the emperors Macrinus (217–18), Elagabalus (218–22), and Alexander Severus (222–35). Much of the historical detail, especially concerning Elagabalus and Alexander Severus, is derived from the biographies of these two emperors in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*; but the author apparently had access to another source for early third-century imperial history, possibly the lost but partially reconstructible 'Kaisergeschichte' (a source which was laid under contribution by Aurelius Victor), as well as Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*. All this material was taken over from the lost original by the compiler of Redaction A. After reproducing the detail concerning the emperors (cc. 1–5 in the following translation), the narrative, as reproduced in Redaction A, moved on to treat Pope Urban, in particular his arrest and punishment by the urban prefect, Turcius Almachius (a character derived from the *passio* of St Caecilia, no. IV) and his agent, the deputy Carpasius (cc. 6–10 in the following translation). But at this point, the compiler of Redaction A evidently grew tired of his task, and so brought the narrative to an abrupt conclusion, ending with the appreciative words of Urban's Christian flock when they learn of his arrest. In other words, Redaction A does not contain an account of the trial and execution of Pope Urban.

Redaction B is the text of the *passio* as printed by the Bollandists (*Acta SS., Maii* VI [1688], pp. 11–13). For reasons which are unclear, the Bollandists listed this single text under three distinct numbers in *BHL*: *BHL* 8372 (the Bollandists' cc. 1–10, corresponding to cc. 1 and 11–19 of the present translation);¹¹ *BHL* 8374 (the Bollandists' cc. 11–12, corresponding to cc. 20–2 of the present

¹⁰ *BHLms* lists twenty-three witnesses, none earlier than the twelfth century.

¹¹ *BHLms* lists five witnesses to *BHL* 8372, one of which dates from the tenth century (Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine, 360).

translation);¹² and *BHL* 8375 (the Bollandists' cc. 13–18, corresponding to cc. 23–7 of the present translation).¹³ The compiler of Redaction B took a somewhat different attitude to the original text. Thus, with the exception of the very first sentence of the work ('Urbanus episcopus . . . octavus decimus vicarius extitit'), he eliminated all the historical detail concerning the principates of Macrinus, Elagabalus, and Alexander Severus, preserving nothing of all this but a brief summary sentence ('Praefuit autem temporibus Alexandri; qui cum commonitus a Mammea matre, clemens in Christianos esset', of which the first clause abbreviates a statement in c. 3, the second a statement in c. 5, of the present translation). That is to say, he eliminated nearly everything contained in cc. 1–5 of the present translation; concerning the content of cc. 6–10 of the translation, he retained mention of Turcius Almachius and Carpasius, the deputy, but omitted the account of Carpasius taking Urban to prison (c. 10 of the translation). All this abbreviated narrative constitutes c. 1 of Redaction B as printed by the Bollandists. By the same token, c. 2 of the Bollandists' text (corresponding to c. 11 of the present translation) consists in Redaction B of an extremely abbreviated treatment of material more fully presented in Redaction A. But it is at this point that the compiler of Redaction A abandoned his task.

To summarize: for materials in cc. 1–5 of the translation we are entirely dependent on Redaction A (i.e. the text of Mombricitus); for cc. 6–9 we continue to be dependent on the full treatment in Redaction A, although for purposes of comparison there is abbreviated treatment of the same material in c. 1 of Redaction B. The material in c. 10 is preserved uniquely in Redaction A. The material in c. 11 is preserved most fully in Redaction A, and in abbreviated form in c. 2 of Redaction B. Thereafter Redaction A ceases to be a witness, and we are wholly dependent on the text of Redaction B.

In the translation which follows, the chapter numbering is my own (Mombricitus does not provide chapter numbers for this, or for any text). For sake of convenience I give the chapter numbers of the Bollandists' text (i.e. Redaction B) in square brackets; and for the chapters following c. 11, I adopt the Bollandists' chapter divisions, though I continue to use my own sequential chapter numbering.

1 [1]. Pope Urban,¹⁴ a Roman by birth, was born of a very noble family. His father was named Pontianus; Urban was the eighteenth successor of St Peter.¹⁵

¹² *BHLms* lists thirteen witnesses to *BHL* 8374, including the tenth-century manuscript from Montpellier.

¹³ *BHLms* lists ten witnesses to *BHL* 8375, none earlier than the eleventh century (and not including the tenth-century manuscript from Montpellier).

¹⁴ Urban was pope from 222 to 230; see *LP* (ed. Mommsen, pp. 22–3; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 143; trans. Davis, pp. 7–8), and esp. *EP* I, pp. 258–61 [F. Fatti].

¹⁵ The information in c. 1 concerning Pope Urban is taken from the (lost but reconstructible) first recension of the *Liber pontificalis* (c. 530), in a version which resembled the *Epitome Felicianae* more closely than the *Epitome Cononiana*; see pp. 528–9.

After the blessed Pope Callistus passed away through the triumph of martyrdom in the time of the emperor Macrinus, Urban, already an old man, succeeded to the see of the city of Rome. Once raised to the summit of this distinction, he suffered the many calamities and tribulations of this world: he enjoyed no success because he suffered adversities for the love of Christ. Before his (election to the) papacy, he was a credible confessor (of Christ); and after (election to) the papacy he was tested and judged for the name of the Saviour not once but up to seven times. He caused many vessels (for liturgical use) to be made of silver, and also provided twenty-five silver patens; he also performed the sacred offices with careful diligence. In the end this man converted many to belief in Christ and to baptism through his preaching and teaching—even including the distinguished Valerian, the husband of St Caecilia, and Tiburtius, his relation; he led them both to the palm of martyrdom. And through his salvation-bringing admonitions many were crowned with martyrdom. He conducted five December ordinations, (ordaining) nineteen priests and nine deacons; and he established eight bishops in various places. He occupied the see for eight years, eleven months, and twelve days.¹⁶ The venerable Anteros, who was Greek by birth, succeeded him in the bishopric.

2. And so the pontificate of St Urban fell in the time of Macrinus and his sons. Their reign was a short one, that is, (it lasted) one year.¹⁷ After them reigned Antoninus, whose surname was Heliogabalus. He was born from the phoenix and took his surname from the temple of the Sun. He involved himself in every kind of disgusting (sexual) act; and from that it came about that (after his murder) he was called ‘the Dragged One’ (*Tractaticius*) and ‘the Tiberine’ (*Tiberinus*).¹⁸ And he persevered thus in the government of his empire for two years.

3. When he was dead, it was the 975th year from the Founding of the City, and the Incarnation of our Lord, AD 230, in the sixth indiction.¹⁹ Aurelius Severus Alexander Mamaea succeeded him in the principate, the twenty-fourth successor of Augustus. He was called ‘Caesar’ by the army, ‘Augustus’

¹⁶ The second recension of the *Liber pontificalis* states (mistakenly) that his pontificate lasted ‘four years 10 months 12 days’ (ed. Mommsen, p. 22; trans. Davis, p. 7). The manuscript of the first recension which was being used by our author apparently had the correct reading VIII (not IIII) at this point.

¹⁷ The information concerning these emperors is taken from the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. For Macrinus and his son Diadumenianus, see *SHA* ‘Opilius Macrinus’ and ‘Antoninus Diadumenianus’; for Elagabalus, see *SHA* ‘Antoninus Elagabalus’. The author spells the name *Heliogabalus* in order to emphasize the derivation of Elagabalus’ name from the temple of the Sun.

¹⁸ *SHA*, ‘Antoninus Elagabalus’, xvii. 4–7: the ‘Dragged One’, because he was the only emperor whose body was publicly dragged in the Circus Maximus, and the ‘Tiberine’ because his body was thrown into the Tiber.

¹⁹ These chronological reckonings are erroneous. The 975th year *ab urbe condita* was AD 222 (whereas AD 230 was the 983rd year *ab urbe condita*). In fact, Elagabalus died in 222; indictions were devised by Diocletian and were not recorded before AD 313.

by the senate, and 'Mamaea' by his mother.²⁰ When he was a relatively young man, aged thirteen, he undertook a war against the Persians.²¹ And, as the glorious victor, he discharged whole legions²² of that race (who were) raging and agitating against him.²³ As his assessor (*assessor*) he had Ulpian, the master of his imperial secretariat (*scrinii magister*) and the draughtsman of his laws, who at that time had extensive command of the principles (of law).²⁴ Mamaea, the mother of this Aurelius (Alexander) was a Christian; she had taken the trouble to consult Origen the priest.²⁵

4. He was beneficial to the state, but injurious to himself. At this time Taurinus was declared Augustus in the East. But when he learned that Aurelius (Alexander) was coming there, he threw himself into the river Euphrates out of fear.²⁶ At that time also Julius Maximus seized control of the empire at (a village named) *Sallias*, when many of his soldiers had been corrupted by gifts.²⁷ But when Alexander saw himself being deserted by his

²⁰ SHA, 'Alexander Severus', iii. 1: 'Alexander igitur, cui Mamaea mater fuit (nam et ita dicitur a plerisque').

²¹ No such statement is found in SHA, 'Alexander Severus'; but cf. Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 24: 'although a young man... he immediately made large-scale preparations and commenced a war against Xerxes, king of the Persians' (trans. Bird, p. 26; the error *Xerxes* for *Artaxerxes* (SHA) probably derives from Victor's lost source, the so-called 'Kaisergeschichte').

²² Reading *legiones* for Mombritius' *regiones*.

²³ On Alexander's war against Artaxerxes and the Persians, see SHA, 'Alexander Severus', lv–lvi. These chapters do not mention that he was aged thirteen at the time of the Persian campaign. For the Persians (as well as Sarmatians and Germans) agitating against him, and his dismissal of a legion, see *ibid.* liii–liv; but before he set out from Antioch on his campaign against the Persians, he restored the legion which he had discharged ('eam tamen legionem quam exactoravit rogatus... priusquam ad expeditionem Persicam proficisceretur': liv. 7).

²⁴ SHA, 'Alexander Severus', xxvi. 6 ('nam et consiliarius Alexandri et magister scrinii Ulpianus fuisse perhibetur, qui tamen ambo [sc. Paulus et Ulpianus] assessores Papiniani fuisse dicuntur'). I have emended Mombritius' *Scrinium magistrum* to *scrinii magistrum*.

²⁵ The statement that his mother, Mamaea, was a Christian and that she consulted with Origen, is taken from Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* vi. 21, trans. Rufinus (ed. Mommsen, II, p. 569). On this Julia Mam(m)aea, see DACL VII/2, cols. 304–5 [H. Leclercq].

²⁶ Nothing concerning the rebellion of someone called *Taurinus*, and his suicide in the Euphrates, is found in the sources. SHA mentions one *Verconius Turinus*, a former friend of the emperor, who used this friendship to manipulate Alexander and to extract bribes from petitioners (xxxv. 5–xxxvi. 3); but his activity is apparently confined to Rome, and has nothing to do with Persia and the Euphrates.

²⁷ This is a very garbled account of the assassination of Alexander Severus. According to SHA, 'Alexander Severus', lix. 6, Alexander was 'in quarters with a few men in Britain, or, according to some, in Gaul, in a village named *Sicilia*'; according to Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 24, soldiers 'cut him down in a British village named *Sicilia*' (trans. Bird, p. 27). The village *Sicilia* cannot be confidently identified (in Medieval Latin sources, *Sicilia* refers to Siebenbürgen in Transylvania (Romania)); and neither source makes any mention of Mainz (*Magontiam* in the present *passio* of Pope Urban), so it is not obvious where the author of the *passio* derived this information. The *Iulius Maximus* of the *passio* represents a corruption of Iulius Verus Maximinus (Thrax), the emperor who succeeded Alexander, and who was inevitably suspected of having instigated the murder.

retinue at Mainz, he shouted out that his mother was the cause of his death;²⁸ as the assassin ran up to him, he covered his head and offered his neck, holding it in his hands. Saying this he died, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

5. It must not be omitted, so I think, that he was uniquely devoted to his mother Mamaea, and for that reason was loved by everyone. This Mamaea, because she was a Christian, compelled her son not to unleash the fury of persecution on Christians during his lifetime.²⁹ In this respect he obeyed her wishes, and did nothing of the sort. She had requested from her son that, on her account, he would not disapprove or remove the modest foodstuffs which were left over at table and at mealtimes, since they could be placed on the table for (consumption at) another feast.

6 [1]. In the time of his, that is Alexander's, principate, as we have conscientiously and carefully established, lived the most holy Bishop Urban. He was confined under punishment by the urban prefect (*praefectus urbis*), Turcius³⁰ Almachius, along with those who are mentioned below and who in the end were decapitated, and who thus arrived at their heavenly dwelling.³¹ Therefore, as we said, at a time when because of his mother Alexander would not allow persecution of the servants of Christ, Almachius the prefect, inspired by devilish zeal and envy, began diligently to enquire if somehow the hiding-places of Christians could be located, because he wished anxiously to drink their blood (so to speak). Accordingly, having given numerous (financial) inducements, he anticipated being able to butcher the flesh of saints. And what the emperor had not done, he [Almachius] did, (considering himself) in no wise to be exempt from this (sort of) wickedness; but rather, in performing unspeakable crimes with every kind of enthusiasm, he immersed himself in hell, and did not postpone the lighting of the fires (of hell) for himself.

7 [1]. After many days had passed, when his agents had gone hither and yon in pursuit (of Christians) so that they could fulfil the edict of the tyrant [Almachius], on a certain day, when Almachius was diligently asking about them (and asking) what they had done, a certain deputy (*vicarius*)³² named Carpasius, who was even more cruel, made a proposal—he had even accepted

²⁸ Cf. *SHA*, 'Alexander Severus', lxiii. 5: according to some, the cause of his death was that his mother wished to abandon the war against the Germans and return to the East; but the soldiers disapproved of this plan. The author continues: 'sed haec ab amatoribus Maximini ficta sunt'.

²⁹ Cf. *SHA*, 'Alexander Severus', xxii. 4, to the effect that Alexander himself was tolerant of Christians ('Christianos esse passus est').

³⁰ Reading *Turcio* for Mombritius' *turgido*.

³¹ The name and character of the urban prefect Turcius Almachius has been taken over from the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV.17–22, 25, 28–31). No urban prefect of this name is known at the period in question; see Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 119–21.

³² The deputy (*vicarius*) Carpasius has been taken over from the *passio* of Pope Marcellus (XX.18–19, 23). It is apparent that Carpasius here is being conceived as the deputy of the urban prefect Turcius Almachius (not of the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy).

money from the tyrant—and said to him: ‘Most illustrious man (*illustissime*),³³ my lord prefect, while I was involved in fulfilling your peaceable orders and was going about searching everywhere, by chance, as we were proceeding determinedly along a byway, a huge cave suddenly came into view. As I halted our progress, I looked into it. And because—as your merciful self is well aware—when, during the summer, when the vast size of the sun illuminates the centre [i.e. the earth] and the upper skies are brilliantly bright, someone’s vision is blunted and he does not see, though his eyes are open: if then he wishes to peer into dark spaces, he can see nothing at that time. Because of this, while I was peering intently inside with my eyes flickering, behold, there appeared to our inspection six Christians, chanting and sweetly singing psalms—because, as I suspect, they were living there secretly.’ When Turcius heard this, clapping his hands, he expressed thanks to him: ‘O’, he said, ‘if you were able to accomplish such great things in line with my desires, what great honours would I be able to bestow on you! Go’, he said, ‘on horseback, at a swift pace, to the underground cave, lest they take to flight and frustrate our wishes.’

8 [1]. And so Carpasius the deputy set out quickly; and when they arrived at the place where the holy bishop was praying, together with three deacons and two priests, he began to treat them insolently; and he said to them, ‘Explain quickly to me where you come from and what you are doing here.’ The holy bishop replied: ‘We are Roman citizens; we have no business here except (the worship of) our Lord, Jesus Christ, Whom we serve by day and night.’ Carpasius said to him: ‘Therefore, because you are Christians, and have readily indicated to me what I wanted to hear, for that reason there is to be no delay, but you are to go before a judge.’ The most holy bishop replied: ‘Do you think perhaps that we fear you or your judge? We are ready, in the name of the Lord. Let’s go! Do what is monstrous, so that you can wipe away from us what is unclean.’ And he said to his clergy: ‘You, who are the vessels of the Lord, my dear sons: let us go out among sinners, so that we can purchase something, that is to say, by selling earthly things and buying heavenly (things), by giving away grief and receiving joy, by giving up the sustenance of the flesh, which is a pittance, and receiving the sustenance of the spirit, which remains forever, by giving up light mixed with shadows and receiving light without darkness, where that Emperor alone reigns Who is the True Light.’ Listening to these things, Carpasius began to shout out with derision, ‘I testify by the gods and goddesses that you are mentally insane and do not know what you are saying.’ Then they were taken to the Palace of Vespasian,³⁴ where Almachius was

³³ As urban prefect, Turcius Almachius belongs to the highest rank of the senatorial nobility (*illustres*); see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9.

³⁴ Although there are references in ancient sources to a *Domus Vespasiani* on the Quirinal, near the site of the modern Via delle Quattro Fontane (see Platner–Ashby, p. 197, and Richardson, pp. 137–8), no building called the ‘Palace of Vespasian’ (*Palatium Vespasianum*) is known to have existed in intramural Rome. For this reason, and because the events of the

anticipating and awaiting the arrival of Carpasius, so he could see what he had found. Thus did he wish to spill the blood of the saints, like someone who wishes to eliminate his enemies!

9 [1]. It happened that when the blessed Pope Urban entered, he opened his mouth and said that, 'All the gods of the pagans are demons, but our God made the heavens.'³⁵ And when they were taken into the presence of Almachius, John the priest opened his mouth, saying, 'We have reflected, O Lord, on Your justifications; we will not forget Your words.'³⁶ The prefect Almachius, observing them, spoke to them in a fury: 'Is not this man that Urban, the profane seducer of men, who has already been condemned once and again in our proscriptions,³⁷ whom the Christians call their pope?' The blessed bishop replied to him: 'I do indeed seduce men, so that they reject the way of wickedness and come to the way of truth.' Almachius the prefect said: 'Truly, you do not teach the way of truth, because you do not fear the gods, nor dread the commands of emperors.' To this the blessed pope replied: 'Nor do I fear you, nor do I obey your orders. Do what you are going to do. For I know my Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whose assistance I have been, and am, governed.' To whom Almachius: 'You wretch', he said, 'sacrifice and live. For if you will not do this, you will be made an example for all Christians.' Carpasius spoke to Almachius the prefect and to all the people (present): 'What do you think is to be done with these men?' Almachius said: 'Let them be taken to the *Pagus*, next to the temple of Jupiter, and be remanded in prison there.'³⁸

narrative are situated in the vicinity of the third mile of the Via Appia, Lucrezia Spera has argued, following Heinrich Jordan, that the 'Palace of Vespasian' is in fact to be identified as the Palace of Maxentius, which was located between the second and third mile of the Via Appia, and was described in the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* as the 'Palace of Titus and Vespasian' (see Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom*, II, pp. 404 and 406–9, who first suggested the identification with the palace of Maxentius); and see Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 272–4 [= Unità Topografica 462], as well as (briefly) *eadem*, 'Vespasiani Palatium', *LTUR. Suburbium V*, pp. 249–50. On the palace of Maxentius itself, see G. Pisani Sartorio, 'Maxentii praedium (Via Appia)', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 49–59, esp. pp. 49–50 with figs. 45–7.

³⁵ Ps. 95: 5.

³⁶ Ps. 118: 16.

³⁷ The meaning of this statement is clarified by the *passio* of St Caecilia (no. IV), where it is stated that Pope Urban 'had twice been made to confess his Christianity' (IV.6, p. 147 with n. 35).

³⁸ The *Pagus*, with its temple of Jupiter, is also mentioned in the *passio* of St Caecilia (IV.22 and 24), where it is said to be at the fourth mile from the City (*quarto milliario ab Urbe*). The precise specification of this location suggested to previous commentators identification with a monumental tomb-structure at the fourth mile of the Via Appia; however, Lucrezia Spera has argued that the site is more probably that of a sanctuary dedicated to Jupiter at the *third* mile of the Via Appia, and to be identified with the Pago Triopio, a monumental area between the second and fourth mile of the Via Appia on which the residence of Herodes Atticus, called the Triopio, was located, near to the mausoleum of Caecilia Metalla: *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 283–4 (Unità Topografica 484: *Templum Iovis*). The existence of a temple of Jupiter at this site is known from inscriptions (*CIL VI*, nos. 382 and 413); and note that the temple of Jupiter was very near to the Palace of Maxentius, referred to by our author as the *Palatium Vespasianum* (n. 34). The prison next to the *Pagus* (*carcerem iuxta Pagum*), mentioned here and

10. Carpasius was instantly made happy by this, and seized the blessed Pope Urban, together with his clergy, and remanded them in custody in the aforementioned prison, where he had been ordered to take them. When many Christians heard about this, they rejoiced in the Lord, because they too desired to achieve the crown of martyrdom. And yet extreme sadness afflicted them, because he [Urban] had been wickedly removed from their presence—he who had been accustomed to preach to them devoutly and to console them. They therefore said: ‘O most holy and kindly bishop, sustainer of the poor, of widows and of orphans, indefatigable comforter of Christians, skilful sower of holy scripture, most ready with words (of comfort) before all others, filled with sanctity, stuffed with mercy, possessed of all modesty, a bold warrior on behalf of the salvation of souls, and a tireless director of the present life, a vigorous hater of wealth, an incomparable lover of the everlasting life. Although attractive in appearance, he is far more attractive in his faith as well as in his works, which are accomplished through faith; an excellent shepherd of his sheep, their charming lover and defender, to the point that he would give up his own soul for the sake of his sheep; and so that the threatening wolf would not carry someone off, he himself, the blessed man, supported by the Holy Spirit, did not hesitate to offer himself.’

11 [2]. While saying all this they arrived at the prison. The prison warder, a man named Anolinus, having accepted a bribe from them, took them into the blessed bishop. When they saw him [Urban], they began to groan out loud; and, prostrate on the ground, they awaited his apostolic blessing. But, when he had finished his prayer, he said, ‘Get up, brothers, and attentively take in the words of the holy author, so that the pestilent enemy, who is always trying to destroy the saints, will not find us sleeping.’ And then he began to quote from memory the words of the holy gospel, supplying that which the Lord had said: ‘“Blessed are those servants, whom their lord found awake when he arrived”,³⁹ that is, persevering in good and holy works. We have heard of the work: let us now hear of the reward. “Amen, I say to you: He shall place you over all his goods.”⁴⁰ The pressures and tribulations of this world, and the temptations and adversities of the devil: that we ought to bear these unflinchingly and with firm resolve for love of the Saviour, the Saviour Himself said beforehand: “Be, therefore, wise as serpents and simple as doves”⁴¹—so that you can recognize the cunning of the tyrant and so that you may be pure and remote from the evil of poison. “Beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you, and you will be brought before governors, and before kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.”⁴² And what does Holy Scripture

again in c. 13 [4], is probably, in the opinion of Spera, an invention by the author of the present *passio*: Spera, *ibid.*, p. 284 (Unità Topografica 485: *carcer*).

³⁹ Luke 12: 37.

⁴⁰ Matt. 24: 47.

⁴¹ Matt. 10: 16.

⁴² Matt. 10: 17–18.

say in another place?—"Be strong in battle, and fight with the ancient serpent, and you will receive the eternal kingdom"⁴³—that is indeed eternal which never ends.⁴⁴

12 [3]. After this Almachius the prefect sent (a message) to Carpasius the deputy, that he was to bring the profane Urban into his presence. Urban, having been expelled from the prison together with his clergy, is presented to Turcius Almachius. Looking at them, he said: 'Put aside your obstinacy, and sacrifice to the gods whom the emperors worship; and draw back from the insanity with which you are infected. For through your deceptions nearly five thousand men have already perished, for whose death you are responsible.' The blessed Urban said: 'They have not died, as you think, but have blessedly travelled to the heavenly realms.' Almachius said: 'Caecilia, seduced by this empty hope, together with her husband and brother-in-law, lost all their (worldly) distinction, and left you an immense fortune, which it is appropriate for you now to reveal.' The blessed Urban replied: 'Fool! Acknowledge the Creator, for Whom they chose to die, while disbursing all (their wealth) to the poor.' Almachius said: 'Put aside this obstinacy, so that you can all live; if not, you are to die wretchedly.' The blessed Urbanus said: 'They do not die, except those who displease their Creator with their faith or works.'

13 [4]. And Almachius, turning to the saintly priests John and Mamilianus, said: 'And do you feel this way?' And they replied: 'The counsel of our father is salubrious, but wisdom does not enter into a wicked soul.' Almachius said: 'As I see it, you have become worse than your silly old master; but, wretches, are you not ashamed that, having been condemned by our proscriptions so many times over, you persevere in your impudence?' And in a rage he ordered that they be beaten with lead-weighted whips. When they were being beaten, they cried out: 'We give thanks to You, O Lord.' Almachius straightway shouted out, saying: 'These men have been trained in magic, such that they can in no way obey our commands.' The blessed Urban said to him: 'On the contrary, you, wretch, have become like your gods, who have ears but do not hear, eyes and do not see.' Almachius became enraged at this and said: 'Are you not afraid to open your mouth insolently to insult the gods? I swear to the gods and goddesses, that you are worthy to undergo capital punishment!' St Urban said: 'As to how worthy your gods are of reverence, you can easily understand

⁴³ The quotation, as printed by Mombricitus ('Estote fortes in bello et pugnate cum antiquo serpente, et accipietis regnum aeternum'), is not in fact biblical, but is the text of an antiphon for the Vigil of SS. Peter and Paul in the Office antiphoner (*Liber responsalis*) attributed to Gregory the Great, and possibly dating from the period of his pontificate, or from the seventh century, even though it is preserved in a ninth-century Carolingian manuscript, the famous 'Antiphoner of Compiègne' (Paris, BNF, lat. 17436); the antiphon is ed. *PL* LXXVIII, col. 819.

⁴⁴ At this point the text printed by Mombricitus ends, with the bland statement: 'Persevering thus, just as he said, until the end, they obtained the rewards of (eternal) life—for which we hope with all eagerness and which we will enjoy forever, through His permission. Amen.'

if you reflect on their deeds. But our God created all things, and strengthened us, saying: "Do not fear those who kill the body; they cannot kill the soul".⁴⁵ Almachius said: 'Not at all; but, since you are an old man, you think of death as repose; and so, as if you were envious of the young men, you cause them to give up what old age is forcing you to give up.' To this John the priest replied: 'You are obviously lying. To live as Christ and to die in (our) youth for our father is advantageous;⁴⁶ indeed He many times became a confessor for Him and laid down His soul for His sheep.' Then Almachius ordered Carpasius to come to him, and said to him: 'Listen, Carpasius, to this sacrilegious Urban, together with his clergy: lock him up in private custody, until he will obey our commands.' Taking them, Carpasius led them back to prison at the *Pagus*. And as the saints entered, they were chanting psalms, saying: 'O Lord, You are become our refuge, from (this) generation and (for) posterity.'⁴⁷

14 [5]. And when they learned this, some Christians came to them at night, among whom were three tribunes—Fabian, Callistus, and Ammonius—and two priests, Fortunatus and Justinus. When they arrived at the door, they stood there knocking. When Martial the deacon heard them, he took care to announce it to the blessed Urban; when he heard it, he asked Anolinus the prison warder (*carcerarius*) to allow them to come in to him. As soon as they entered, they fell at the feet of St Urban, and said in tears: 'Pray for us, holy father, because the time of persecution is at hand.' He replied to them: 'Do not weep because of this, but rather rejoice: it is fitting for us to enter God's kingdom by way of many tribulations.' Spending all night in hymns and chants, they begged the mercy of God. As Anolinus saw everything which was happening, he threw himself at the feet of the blessed Urban, asking with tears that he be baptized by him. The blessed Urban ordered him to get up, and said to him: 'Do you see, my son, that you may receive forgiveness for your sins if you believe with all your heart?' Anolinus replied, saying with a moan, 'I believe, my lord.' And he baptized him, and made the sign of the Cross over him. And, celebrating mass when daylight came, they were nourished with celestial bread.

15 [6]. On hearing of this, Almachius ordered Urban, with his clergy, to be brought once again before him in tribunal; he said to him: 'Do you thus persevere in your madness, that not only do you not recall yourself from error, but you even seek to implicate others in this error? For I hear that you have infected Anolinus, my prison registrar (*commentariensis*), with this plague.' To this Anolinus said: 'Unhappy me, who in the past days of my life did not know my Creator! Nevertheless I give thanks to Him, because at least

⁴⁵ Matt. 10: 28.

⁴⁶ There is intentional ambiguity here: Urban is father to the young priests, as God was Father to Christ—and indeed to all of them.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ps. 93: 12.

in the final days of my life, He mercifully granted me knowledge of Him.' Almachius said: 'The chattering of this man, if it is not suppressed, will be the cause of condemnation for many'; and, passing sentence, he ordered that he be decapitated. He was taken to the temple of Diana;⁴⁸ when he refused to sacrifice, he was decapitated next to the temple, on 18 May.⁴⁹

16 [7]. Thereafter Turcius Almachius, the prefect, ordered a tribunal to be prepared so that, by examining these servants of Christ by night, he might perform a dark deed. And so, confronting them, he said: 'Tell me, wretches, what is this insanity of yours, that you prefer death rather than life?' In replying to him the bishop [Urban] said: 'They do not die, who suffer for Christ, but rather they receive everlasting life.' The prefect said: 'In no way can I understand how this could be.' The blessed Urban replied: 'Because carnal man does not see the things which are God's.' Almachius said: 'The repayment for your arrogant answer is at hand, because you are running riot to insult me and the gods.' And he gave orders to Carpasius, saying: 'Take them to the temple next to the *Pagus*, and they will either sacrifice to the great god Jupiter, or will be butchered by many tortures.' Arriving, therefore, at the temple of Jupiter next to the *Pagus*, which is called the 'Place of Executions' (*Locus trucidatorium*),⁵⁰ they were required by the agents to offer libations to the gods. They laughed at this, and, spitting on the idols, they said: 'Let them be like those who do these things, and all those who trust in them.' In a rage Carpasius said to the saints: 'You wretches, leave this perverse dogma and worship the gods, and be friends of the emperors.' The blessed Urban replied: 'You foolish dog, a foul stench emanates from your throat, as if from an open tomb! You cannot persuade us in any way to be somehow separated from the love of Christ.' Carpasius turned to his agents and said: 'What do you say, are these blasphemers bolder for their evil deeds than some soldier for the defence of the State?' The saints replied: 'If you exert yourselves thus for the worship of stones, so that you do not even spare your blood relatives, what are we to do on behalf of the true and living God, by Whom we were created?' Carpasius said: 'It is necessary for us to follow the orders of our emperors; that is to say, unless you will sacrifice, you will be sentenced to capital punishment, after having

⁴⁸ The context implies that the temple of Diana was located in the vicinity of the *Pagus* and the temple of Jupiter; but, in the opinion of Lucrezia Spera, the temple of Diana is a fictional creation by the author of the present *passio*; see *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 284 (Unità Topografica 486: *templum Dianae*); and *eadem*, 'Dianae templum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 199–200.

⁴⁹ No commemoration of Anolinus is recorded against this date in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.

⁵⁰ This 'Place of Executions' is envisaged as being in the vicinity of the temple of Jupiter at the *Pagus* (see n. 38), but is not otherwise attested; as Lucrezia Spera observes, its existence is probably to be explained in terms of narrative expediency. See L. Spera, 'Trucidatorium locus', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, p. 208.

been butchered by torture.’ The saints said in reply: ‘This is what we hope for.’ Carpasius said to his [Urban’s] clergy: ‘Your leader, made dull by old age, wishes to die; but it is appropriate for you to be wise and to look to your youth.’ The saints replied, saying: ‘In no way will we be deflected from the footsteps of our father.’

17 [8]. Then Carpasius, reflecting on the intransigence of the saints, took them back to Almachius, the urban prefect, reporting that he could not recall them from their original undertaking, neither by threats nor by prayers. Then the prefect, shaking his head, said: ‘I see that they are heading to the point at which they choose to die rather than to recall their minds from these superstitions. Now, therefore, let them be taken back to the temple; and, if they do not sacrifice at once, let the argument be conducted with sword blades, rather than with the outpouring of words.’ At this a certain Tarquinius, also known as Taurinus, said to the prefect: ‘If you, O prefect, were to go with them to the temple, you could perhaps turn their minds to better (ends).’ The prefect believed this man’s assertion; and sending the saints on ahead with his agents, he himself, surrounded by a cohort of soldiers, followed them. As they walked along, the saints were chanting psalms: ‘We delight, O Lord, in the way of Your testimonies, as in all riches.’⁵¹ And when they arrived at the *Pagus*, they were urged by the soldiers to sacrifice to the demons. When they had prayed, and had cried out to the Lord with all their hearts, the blessed Urban, raising his voice and gazing on the little statue of Jupiter, said: ‘May the power of our God destroy you.’ And the idol suddenly collapsed; and the (pagan) priests, who tended the sacrificial fire, fell down dead.

18 [9]. At that point fear overcame the prefect, and fleeing with his remaining soldiers, he enclosed himself in the Palace of Vespasian, raging against the saints; and, having conducted an investigation into (their practices), he ordered them to be brought before his tribunal. He spoke to them in indignation: ‘How far will you practise this magic art? Or do you think that you can extract yourselves from my hands?’ In reply the saints said: ‘Our Lord has the power to extract us from your hands.’ Then Almachius ordered them to be stretched out on the ground and beaten at length with staves; and, as they were giving thanks to God, one of the deacons, with his eyes fixed on heaven, gave up his spirit. But St Urban urged the rest of them not to fear these temporary torments. Almachius said to his agents: ‘Beat him with lead-weighted whips and scorpion-whips,⁵² because he laughs at the staves.’ And when this was being done, the agents of the devil cast the body of St Lucian [the deacon who had died of the beating] in front of the saints. No Christian had openly dared to bury it, because of the edict of the tyrants. Therefore

⁵¹ Ps. 118: 14.

⁵² See no. XVI (p. 339, n. 90).

Fortunatus, coming at night, took the body and buried it in a crypt in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on 19 June.⁵³

19 [10]. Three days later, Almachius ordered his agents to take the blessed Urban, with his clergy, to the temple of Diana and, if they refused to sacrifice, they were to be beheaded without delay. And while they were being taken there, the blessed Pope encouraged them, saying: 'Behold, the Lord calls us, saying, "Come unto me all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you".'⁵⁴ "Thus far, we see Him as if through a glass darkly; the time is nigh, that we see Him face to face".'⁵⁵ While he was anxiously alerting them with these and similar words, they arrived at the temple; and the saints said to the executioners: 'Do what you are to do, as if we had now rejected what you know we have so often rejected (in the past).' And therefore, when he had pressed them to sacrifice, and they had utterly refused, they were taken outside the temple and beheaded. The aforementioned tribunes—Fabian, Callistus, and Ammonius—arriving there with a number of other Christians, wept with great lamentation over their shepherd, who had laid down his own soul for them. They buried him with his companions in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the Via Appia, on 25 May.⁵⁶

20 [11]. When this was over, Carpasius, the deputy, departed in order to offer incense to the (idols of the) gods, and he was immediately seized by a demon. When this was announced to Almachius, fear overcame him, and he ordered him [Carpasius] to be brought before him as quickly as possible. When he was brought by the soldiers before Almachius, the demon began to torment him severely, and he managed to bite some of them with his rabid teeth, confessing all the while the punishments which he had violently inflicted on the saints, and that he had unjustly sentenced them to death because he had wantonly scorned their truthful words, and that the saints deserved to receive inexpressible praise because of their glorious struggles. Almachius, seeing that

⁵³ No commemoration of a martyr named Lucian is recorded against 19 June in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*. On the cemetery of Praetextatus, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 282–99; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 214–16; Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–92; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–84; and n. 56.

⁵⁴ Matt. 11: 28.

⁵⁵ Cf. I Cor. 13: 12.

⁵⁶ According to one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, Pope Urban was buried 'in a large crypt' (*spelunca magna*) in company with Tiburtius, Valerian, and Maximus, as well as Felicissimus and Agapitus (Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661). The reference to the other martyrs allows identification of the cemetery as that of Praetextatus; and during the past generation archaeologists have succeeded in identifying what they refer to as the 'Spelunca Magna' (after the *Notitia*), which is thought to be the burial site of Pope Urban: see Tolotti, 'Ricerca dei luoghi venerati', pp. 7–102 with pls. I–III, esp. 41–58 (what de Rossi described as the 'Crypta quadrata', designated Ax by Tolotti), with discussion of the burial of Pope Urban at 55–8 and 101–2, and Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*, pp. 65–77 (on the *Spelunca Magna*); for Pope Urban's tomb, identified as *cubiculo* Ax by Tolotti, see *ibid.* p. 74 with n. 440, p. 182, and p. 190 with n. 1240.

he [Carpasius] was speaking the truth in his insane condition, thought that he was a Christian, and ordered him to be taken away from him—in great sadness, however, because he [Carpasius] had accomplished many wicked deeds through his [Almachius'] malign counsel. For the devil was relating through the mouth of Carpasius whatever Almachius had done wickedly, and was uncovering the crimes of the pagans, was reporting how and by what means they and their accomplices had become idolaters, and that the idols had formerly been able to do nothing for them; and, continuing, he said: 'Do you not know what the master and teacher of Christians, the "vessel of election",⁵⁷ the Apostle Paul said? "We know", he said, "that an idol is nothing, and that there is no God in heaven or on earth, but one",⁵⁸ and drawing a little closer, and carrying on in this vein, he was choked by the devil, by whom he was possessed, and died.

21 [12]. When the judge (*iudex*)⁵⁹ discovered this, he took care to announce it to the wife of Carpasius. The wife of Carpasius, named Marmeria, on hearing that her husband had died in this manner, came at night to the blessed priests, Fortunatus and Justinus, and threw herself at their feet, together with her daughter, named Lucinia, praying and beseeching that they be reborn in the font of Christ. Accordingly, the saints Fortunatus and Justinus, giving thanks to God, Who calls forth those things which are not, just as (He does) those which are, preaching to them and teaching them the rule of salvation and the way of the commandments of Christ, and catechizing them, imposed on them a sevenfold fast; when this was finished, one of them baptized them in the name of the Holy Trinity, as is the procedure in the Church. But three days later Fortunatus, the priest, coming to the house of Marmeria,⁶⁰ preached to her there concerning the teachings of the faith of Christ; and many pagans, who had come there to hear this, were baptized by him. For Fortunatus the priest took care incessantly to preach Christ our Lord, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world; indeed he was also concerned to announce the glory of eternal life, which He promised to his followers. Many came unanimously to believe in these salvation-bringing words, and were baptized, now strengthened with all confidence in Christ. Then all the people who were in the house of Carpasius believed in Christ, and were baptized, expressing praise to God.

⁵⁷ Act. 9: 14.

⁵⁸ I Cor. 8: 4.

⁵⁹ The 'judge' here is presumably Almachius, who as urban prefect had judicial authority to try criminal trials (*cognitiones*); the present hearing of Carpasius is not in any sense a criminal trial.

⁶⁰ We learn from the following chapter (22 [13]) that the *domus Marmeriae* was 'located outside the Palace of Vespasian next to the Columns'. Lucrezia Spera suggests that this *domus* is to be located at the third mile of the Via Appia, just beyond the *Palatium Vespasiani* (i.e. the palace and circus of Maxentius) next to a structure with columns (see n. 62), probably the entrance to the Triopio of Herodes Atticus: *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 285 (Unità Topografica 488: *domus Marmeriae*); and see *eadem*, 'Marmeriae domus', *LTUR. Suburbium IV*, pp. 40–1.

22 [13]. Meanwhile Marmenia, together with her daughter, began to ask St Fortunatus what had happened to the bodies of the saints, or how they had been committed to burial. The blessed Fortunatus explained to them what had been done with the remains of the saints, as has been explained. She said: 'I earnestly beg your Blessedness, Fortunatus, most holy confessor of Christ, that we hasten there with extreme caution and seek the remains of the saints, and bury them properly, as they deserve.' This notion pleased Fortunatus, and he took care to communicate it to St Justinus. Then the saints set out and came, together with Marmenia (who was) faithful in the Lord, to the place where the bodies of the saints were buried [i.e. the cemetery of Praetextatus], chanting psalms to the Lord and saying, 'You have commanded your commandments to be kept most diligently',⁶¹ and the following (verses) of the psalm. When the blessed Marmenia saw the bodies of the saints, she began to weep tearfully and to say, 'O holy and wonderful Pope Urban, I humbly beseech your Holiness that you pray to Christ on my behalf, that He not allow me to be damned in my wickedness, and that I not be committed to hell for the nature of my deserts. O most kindly contestant of Christ, I ask you that you deign to accept my prayers, and I pray that the wickedness of the cruel Carpasius not be converted into vengeance (against me).' Saying many things like this, and shouting out, she wept bitterly. At length they raised up the saintly bodies with great honour, and took them to the house of Marmenia, which was located outside the Palace of Vespasian next to the Columns.⁶² The blessed Marmenia ordered them to be placed there in magnificent fashion; she covered every part of the wall with marble plaques, where they had buried with spices the bodies of the blessed Urban and Mamilianus, the priest. They took care to enclose the sacred tomb with a marvellous stone cover. Above it they caused a large crypt to be excavated, square (in shape) and of lasting construction; and in it they took care to place the bodies of the priests John, Chromatius, and Dionysius, and of the deacons Martial, Eunuchius, and Lucian, accompanied by chanting, hymns and praise. Up to the present day many miracles are performed at their venerable tombs in honour of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.⁶³

23 [14]. These things eventually reached the ears of Almachius, who straightway ordered his agents to bring the blessed Marmenia to him. When

⁶¹ Ps. 118: 4.

⁶² 'Next to the Columns' (*prope Columnas*). In the opinion of Lucrezia Spera, the 'Columns' formed the impressive propylaeum which constituted the entrance to the vast residential area known as the Triopio of Herodes Atticus (some of the columns were reused by Maxentius in the construction of his palace complex): see *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, p. 284 (Unità Topografica 487: *Columnae*); and *eadem*, 'Columnae', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 132–3. Herodes 'Atticus' (correctly Claudius Atticus Herodes Tiberius, fl. 128–38) was the first Roman consul of Greek origin, and was a close friend of the emperor Hadrian, to whom he probably owed the acquisition of his vast suburban estate.

⁶³ The translation of the bodies of Pope Urban and his clergy from the cemetery of Praetextatus to the *domus Marmeniae* is not recorded in any other source, martyrological or otherwise.

she had been brought before him in the presence of everyone, he began to speak to her: 'My merciful self has heard that superstitious nonsense has overtaken the mind of Marmenia, but in no way am I able to treat this (rumour) with trusting credulity. Therefore, Marmenia, speak out, so that the ears of everyone may hear the truth, and be confident of whatever your distinguished nobility may say, and do not allow any anxiety to enter your mind: let false rumour quickly be dispelled!' The kindly woman replied to this: 'I simply don't know what you are implying with words such as these: explain it better, if you can do so; fear nothing at all by being steadfast, and state your business unconditionally, and then (you may) receive my answer.' And the judge said: 'If I may simply speak clearly to you: cease to reply in empty words! It has been reported in our palace that you have presumed to associate yourself with the superstitious teachings of the Christians, and that you now scorn the sacred gods. Indicate quickly what you ought to reply to these (charges).' Marmenia said: 'I swear by the merits of the saints, that you ought to have said nothing, except that they [the gods] are false and empty idols.' The judge said: 'I am unable to tolerate such perverse speech from a woman.' Marmenia said: 'What do the wicked edicts have to say, O Judge, about someone who says that a lie is the truth? Tell me, if you please.' And Almachius said: 'That he be coerced with threats and sentenced to capital punishment.' Marmenia replied: 'Therefore you, O wretch, should be sentenced to capital punishment, and severely coerced, because everything you say is wicked. Who doesn't know that those whom you call gods are made of stone and wood and brass, and were thoroughly wretched and unspeakable while they were alive in this world? But in order that I not pollute my tongue, I shall not mention their ridiculous doings any further.' In a rage, Almachius said: 'Alas, what a shame it is, that in your speech you rise up little by little to unspeakable insults to the gods, you mad woman, revealing your wilful stupidity and pride.' And again he said: 'By the gods, since you were not afraid to incite me to anger, I shall swiftly have your well-coiffed⁶⁴ head cut off!' The saintly woman said, 'So that everyone may know that I most truly am a Christian, I ask you, O Judge, monstrously to lay on all kinds of tortures, so that I may be found purified in my belief in Christ, just as gold (is purified) in fire, and thus may be able to obtain the kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Himself.' Then Almachius the prefect ordered her to be thrust in prison, saying: 'We command that whoever scorns the orders of the unconquerable emperors be thus confined.' But St Marmenia went to the prison rejoicing and exulting; and when she entered it, she began to praise the Lord, and to say, 'Glory be to You, O Christ, and to the Word of Your eternal Parent on high, with Whom and with the Holy Ghost You always reign forever and ever: Who, since I am unworthy, made me

⁶⁴ There is no entry for the adjectival form *crinosus* in either *TLL* or *Souter*.

worthily suffer for Your name. I beseech You, that Your Grace may deign to accompany me up to the end so that, having trampled the wicked enemy underfoot, I may come victorious to You.'

24 [15]. Lucinia, her daughter, on hearing that her mother had behaved with constancy of faith, began to distribute to the poor everything which she possessed, most of all for the expenses of the Christians whose own wealth she knew had been expended in works of this kind. Then SS. Fortunatus and Justinus warned all the Christians they could (find); and it was announced to Almachius that Lucinia had expended all her wealth for the consolation of orphans, widows, and Christians. Shaking his head, and shouting in an angry and sneering⁶⁵ voice, he said, 'Alas, what kind of wicked seduction is this, which never fears terror, is not compelled by torture, and, so to speak, treats all kinds of torment as if they were nothing? This seduction is a fire which consumes so that it can grow by finding more to consume.' 'Indeed we (Christians) do call that a fire, even though the wicked judge would destroy it, concerning which Christ said in the Annunciation, that is, in the gospel: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"'⁶⁶ In a rapid development the judge immediately ordered his agents to bring Lucinia before him, together with all those who were living in her house, since⁶⁷ he could in no way refuse to acknowledge her, together with the blessed Marmeria, in his severe interrogation. When they were brought before Almachius, the insane judge, looking at them with savage mien, said: 'Tell me, what is your social rank? Or what is your profession?' The saints replied to these (questions): 'If you wish to know our mortal condition, you should know that we are slaves of our mistress, this Marmeria. As for our profession, we confess ourselves to be Christian, with the permission of our Lord.' Then he said: 'Behold, I see that you are all Christians.' And the saints said: 'It is better to recognize and profess the Way, which is Christ, and we are to travel by that Way to the homeland, that is, to eternal life, rather than to bow our necks or submit to your empty gods, and to agree to your wicked commands.'

25 [16]. Then, in his indignation, Turcius Almachius ordered Tarquinius Taurinus to cut off their heads without further interrogation, and said: 'People of this sort are never humbled except through severe torture or a cruel death.' After they had been violently beaten, Tarquinius led them at once to the idol of Mars,⁶⁸ so that they could sacrifice. When they had all refused to make offerings, they were found worthy to receive the palm of martyrdom: for

⁶⁵ The Bollandists' text here reads *ironiaque*, presumably an error for *ironicaque*; for the meaning of *ironicus*, 'sneering', see *TLL* VII/2, col. 382, where it is glossed 'fere i. q. irrisorius'.

⁶⁶ Luke 12: 49.

⁶⁷ Reading *quia* for the Bollandists' *quatenus*.

⁶⁸ On the well-documented temple of Mars at the first mile of the Via Appia, see F. Coarelli, 'Martis aedes, templum, lucus', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 44–5, and Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma*, pp. 50–1 (Unità Topografica 41: *tempio di Marte*). On the adjacent *clivus Martis*, where executions were carried out, see no. VI (p. 192, n. 55).

they were all decapitated for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ—some twenty-two of them, not counting the blessed Marmenia and her daughter Lucinia. Their martyrdom is commemorated on 30 May.⁶⁹ Christians recognized how these saints had fought perpetually for the love of Christ; and they came at night and took away their bodies with hymns and praise, and buried them in the place where St Urban was buried.

26 [17]. At the time when this was all taking place, there was a holy man named Savinus, of venerable life, who was himself a member of the priesthood. When he heard that the blessed Marmenia, with her daughter and her household, had proceeded to the Lord, it greatly distressed him, and he passed to Christ. For twelve years he had been wasting away in prison, for his confession of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the Son of Almighty God. And when Taurinus, since he was the prison warder, realized that St Savinus had died, he tied up his feet with a rope, and dragged his corpse along the ground, and then abandoned it, unburied, in the Forum. Then, at night, the priest, Polycarp, came and took away the body of St Savinus, and placed it in a sarcophagus, where 125 martyrs were buried.

27 [18]. Finally, the wicked Almachius, in a state of impatience, began to promise many rewards, if any discoverer and betrayer of Christians would come forward and announce this in his hearing, through whatever craft or cunning. Whence it happened that after three days a zealous opponent of God, being eager for reward, reported to him that he had discovered forty-two Christians. And immediately, in his joy, he said, 'The guilt of the Christians is so great in every respect that it can in no way be concealed from our Excellency.' My brothers,⁷⁰ let it not be thought that the merciful words of our Lord and Saviour had come to the notice of this wretched and mortal judge, saying 'No one lights a lamp and places it under a bushel, but rather puts it on a lamp stand, so it can shine on everyone.'⁷¹ The divine word on this subject was expressed by the truthful and holy Prophet [i.e. the Psalmist], namely, 'Stupid people cannot realize (this), and a fool does not understand it.'⁷² And then the tyrant ordered a certain Annitius, the deputy (*vicarius*),⁷³ to go there and to remove them all quickly. He set off happily to perform the deed which had been commanded by the prefect's savagery. The saints,

⁶⁹ No such commemoration is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, or in any other martyrological source.

⁷⁰ The author here addresses his audience directly. The fact that he calls them *fratres* suggests that they are monks; and this suggestion is supported by the fact that at an earlier stage of the *passio* the author had quoted an antiphon from the Office antiphoner (*Liber responsalis*), a text which would have been chanted by monks during celebration of the Divine Office. See above, n. 43.

⁷¹ Matt. 5: 15.

⁷² Ps. 91: 7.

⁷³ Annitius has replaced Carpasius as 'deputy' to Almachius, the urban prefect. No 'deputy' named Annitius appears to be attested in any other source.

anticipating this, armed themselves with the sign of the Cross of Christ, fearlessly awaiting their death by reciting holy prayers. Behold, the agents of the devil arrived, and hastened to cut off their heads without delay. But Polemius, the priest, recovered their bodies, and buried them where St Caecilia was buried.⁷⁴ These martyrs of Christ suffered martyrdom on 1 January, with our Lord, Jesus Christ reigning, Who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

⁷⁴ That is to say, in the 'Crypt of St Caecilia', next to the famous Papal Crypt, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia; see no. IV (above, p. 141 and n. 14).

XXXI

SS. Rufina and Secunda

c.600 × c.680; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of St Rufina (Via Cornelia, ninth mile)

This brief *passio* recounts the arrest, trial, and execution of two Roman sisters, during the persecution of Valerian (257–8).¹ Throughout the *passio*, considerable emphasis is placed on the sisters' virginity; they were commemorated on 10 or 11 July, in a church bearing the name of St Rufina, at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia.

The narrative is as follows. Rufina and Secunda were two virgin sisters, Roman citizens, who because of their commitment to virginity and Christianity, decided to leave Rome for safety's sake during the persecution under Valerian and Gallienus; they set off for their country estate in Etruria, but their fiancés alerted Count Archesilaus of their departure (c. 1). Accordingly, they were arrested on the Via Flaminia by soldiers, on the orders of Archesilaus, and then handed over to the prefect, Junius Donatus, who interrogated them in his chambers (c. 2). Rufina argued with the prefect (c. 3). The prefect urged her to marry; when she refused, he ordered Secunda to be brought in, so that Rufina could be lashed with whips in her sister's presence (c. 4). Secunda then remonstrated with the prefect, and insisted that virginity was a glorious state (c. 5). Rufina and Secunda were then confined to a dark and stinking cell; but the darkness was expelled by the light of God, whereupon they were placed in a boiling cauldron; but the boiling water miraculously evaporated (c. 6). They were then thrown into the Tiber with a stone tied around their necks, but after half an hour under water, they emerged unscathed; the prefect reported this to Archesilaus (c. 7). On the orders of Archesilaus, they were taken to the tenth mile of the Via Cornelia, to an estate called *Buxus*, where one of them was decapitated, the other beaten to death, and their bodies were left for the wolves; but they appeared in a vision to the matron Plautilla, who retrieved their bodies and constructed a mausoleum for them (c. 8).

¹ Listed *BHL* 7359 and *CPL* 2227; see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 230, 232–3; Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 94–6; *BSS* XI, cols. 460–4 [B. Cignitti]; Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, pp. 115–24; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 300; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 285–6.

The *passio* states that they were martyred on 11 July (c. 8). Although SS. Rufina and Secunda are not commemorated on this date in the *Deposito martyrum* (Appendix I), the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry against 10 July: 'at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia, Rufina <and> Secunda' (Appendix III, p. 654).² None of the early liturgical books has a commemoration on either 10 or 11 July (see Appendix V). As for the site of their burial, and the mausoleum reportedly constructed by Plautilla, the seventh-century itinerary *De locis sanctis martyrum* states simply, 'And next to this same road [i.e. the Via Cornelia] are SS. Rufina and Secunda' (Appendix IV (b) [§1], p. 662); and the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' has a similarly vague entry: 'On the same road is another church, in which the holy virgins Rufina and Secunda rest' (Appendix IV (c) [§1], p. 665). In other words, the only topographical information relating to their burial is the statement in the present *passio*, that they were executed at *Buxus* ('the Box Tree') at the tenth mile of the Via Cornelia, and buried in a mausoleum (c. 8). Nevertheless, this information enabled archaeologists of the British School at Rome, during excavations conducted between 1965 and 1969, to identify the site in question at roughly the *ninth* mile of the Via Cornelia, where there are the remains of a small building with a mosaic floor, arguably a church, datable to the late eighth century, built over a catacomb of the fourth and fifth centuries.³ It is improbable that the late eighth-century building is the mausoleum mentioned in the present *passio*; but, as Fiocchi Nicolai has said, the excavated site is obviously the sanctuary of SS. Rufina and Secunda, even if the original mausoleum remains to be identified.⁴

The date of the *passio* cannot be determined precisely. Cécile Lanéry suggests that it was composed by a cleric of the church of *Silva Candida*, the diocese in which the church of S. Rufina was located, during the century 550 × 650;⁵ it was in any case composed before c.680, since it was laid under contribution by Aldhelm in c. 51 of his prose *De virginitate*.⁶

² The information concerning the location of their burial at the *ninth* mile is found only in the Codex Bernensis of *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (ed. Acta SS., *Nouembris* II/1 [1894], p. 89).

³ On the sanctuary of SS. Rufina and Secunda at the present-day hamlet of Boccea, see the final report of the excavations of 1965–9, published in 1991, in Cotton, Wheeler, and Whitehouse, 'Santa Rufina', esp. pp. 232–9 (the cemetery), 241–4 (the building with mosaic floor, possibly identifiable as a church) and 308–9 (summary); Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri del Lazio*, I. *Etruria meridionale*, pp. 57–64, with pls. I and 7; Saxer, 'Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie', pp. 47–8; Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Ricerche sui monumenti paleocristiani del Lazio', *Vetere Christianorum* 37 (2000), 353–90, at 377–80; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 285–6.

⁴ 'Ricerche sui monumenti paleocristiani' (see n. 3), p. 378: 'Che il sito sia tuttavia quello del santuario delle due martiri è fuor di dubbio.'

⁵ 'Hagiographie', p. 300.

⁶ MGH, AA XV, pp. 307–8. For the date of Aldhelm's (prose) *De virginitate*, see M. Lapidge, 'The Career of Aldhelm', *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 15–69, at 66–7.

Text. The *passio* of SS. Rufina and Secunda appears to have enjoyed a substantial circulation: *BHLms* lists thirty-six manuscripts, of which four are relatively early (two of the ninth, two of the tenth century). The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Iulii III* [1723], pp. 28–9, and adopts their chapter numbering.

1. Rufina and Secunda, two virgin sisters, were Roman citizens, born of their father, Asterius, a senator of the clarissimate (*clarissimus*), and an equally distinguished mother, Aurelia (*clarissima*).⁷ When, at the orders of the Augusti Valerian and Gallienus, the fury of persecution was raging in Rome,⁸ it happened that the fiancés of these virgins, named Armentarius and Verinus, drew back from their faith in Christianity; and, not being content that they themselves should perish, they even urged, by detestable argumentation, that God's servants [Rufina and Secunda] should imitate them. For this reason, in wishing to decline their insane arguments, they set off in a sedan chair for their little country estate, which they were understood to possess in the region of Etruria (*Tuscia*). Hearing of this, Armentarius and Verinus immediately notified Count Archesilaus,⁹ saying: 'Our fiancées have rejected us, to the disgrace of the gods, saying that they worship the one true God, Jesus Christ; and they recoil at all the mysteries of the (pagan) temples. For this reason, they have today fled from the city.'

2. Then the wicked Archesilaus, with his mounted soldiers, arrested the holy virgins of God as they were making their way along the Via Flaminia, at the fourteenth mile from the City; and, taking them back to Rome, he handed them over to the prefect, Junius Donatus,¹⁰ saying: 'I have learned from the accusations of their fiancés that these sacrilegious virgins are living contrary to the law, are denying the gods, abandoning the temples, and acting contrary to the well-being of the emperors. And because our lords, the unconquerable emperors, have entrusted the care of them to me, it was legally permitted that

⁷ On the clarissimate, and the social standing of *uiri clarissimi*, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9.

⁸ Valerian (253–60) and his son, Gallienus (253–68). The persecution begun by Valerian in 257 was suspended by Gallienus soon after his father was captured by King Shapur while on expedition in Persia; when his father died, in 260, Gallienus recognized Christianity as a lawful religion. See Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions*, pp. 83–94; de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus*, pp. 175–85; and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 97–8.

⁹ The author (characteristically) does not specify the title of this count (*comes*). The title simply means that the holder was a senior member (a *comes primi ordinis*) of the emperor's *consistorium* or *comitatus*—the *quaestor*, the *magister officiorum*, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, or the *comes rei privatae*; see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 333–41, and Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 33–7. These titles, and the *consistorium* itself, were established by Constantine, and are anachronistic as applied to the principate of Valerian.

¹⁰ Our author does not specify whether Junius Donatus was the praetorian prefect or the urban prefect. No praetorian prefect of this name is listed for these years in Howe, *The Praetorian Prefect*, pp. 80–1, but in the list of urban prefects for the years 254–354 preserved in the 'Chronographer of 354', an urban prefect named Junius Donatus is recorded against the year 257 (*MGH, AA IX*, p. 65), a fact first noted by Dufourcq (*Gesta*, I, p. 232).

I should arrest them and bring them before Your Magnificence to be investigated.' Then the indignant prefect ordered them to be remanded in custody, and to be brought to him separately in his chambers (*secretarium*)¹¹ three days later. When he had ordered Rufina to be brought in, he said to her: 'Given that you were born into the senatorial classes, how is it that you have descended to such ignoble behaviour, and wish to be bound in chains, rather than to rejoice in freedom with your fiancé?' Rufina replied: 'This temporary captivity rules out eternal captivity, and the everlasting ties of bondage dissolve these temporary chains.'

3. The prefect said: 'Abandon these pointless old women's stories, and sacrifice to the immortal gods, so that you can get back to your fiancé with all the attendant delights.' Rufina replied: 'There are two useless things which you recommend, and one doubtful one which you promise. For you say that I ought to sacrifice to the idols, so that I will die forever; and thereafter to take a husband, so that I will lose the glory of my virginity. After these two hopeless and unacceptable prospects, you promise that I shall reach old age, with its attendant delights, although you yourself are uncertain whether you will (be alive to) reach any future day.' The prefect said: 'Let these words (*verba*) cease, because beatings (*verbera*) have been laid on. Whence it seems to me that you should alter your intentions and flee from these empty beliefs, and not lose the time which still remains for you.' Rufina replied: 'You corrected your statement a little when you said "the time which still remains for me": you reveal that a man's time (here) is not certain, because it is fixed in uncertainty; but I embrace that life which exists in eternity, and promises nothing uncertain to its adherents. Christ, our Master, taught us about this life of truth.'

4. 'When the hardened hearts of the Jews were denying Him with the force of their doubt, He, raising up the dead from the tomb, urged them to witness the evidence of His assertion, so that those who did not wish to believe His words would believe in His miracles.' Junius Donatus, the prefect, said: 'Abandon this vain talk, and marry your man.' Count Archesilaus said: 'This woman is guilty of sacrilege, and cannot be allowed to enter into the state of matrimony.' Rufina replied: 'Just as you say, I cannot be allowed to enter into the state of matrimony, because if I should wish to be the wife of a man, it is obvious that I have not truly vowed my chastity to Christ, the Son of God. So listen, Count Archesilaus: find someone in whom your threats will strike fear. You cannot persuade me away from the palm of my virginity, nor separate me from the love and worship of Christ, the Son of God.' Then he ordered Secunda to be brought in, so that Rufina, her sister, could be lashed with

¹¹ The reference is presumably to the *Secretarium Tellurensis*, where the *tribunalia* (chambers) and *scrinia* (offices) of the urban prefect were located, adjacent to the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*) on the Esquiline; see Richardson, pp. 378–9; Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine*, pp. 247–51; F. Coarelli, 'Praefectura urbana', *LTUR* IV, pp. 159–60; and no. VII (p. 198 n. 17).

whips in her presence. For this profane man hoped that Secunda, overcome with fear, would agree to his arguments.

5. But when she saw her sister being lashed with whips, she began to cry out to the judge: 'What is it that you are doing, you wicked man, you enemy of the kingdom of heaven? Why is it that you are honouring my sister, and dishonouring me?' The prefect says to her: 'I see that you are more insane than your sister.' Secunda replied: 'My sister is not insane, nor am I: we are both Christians. And it is right that we should be beaten together, because we confess Christ, our Lord, together. For the glory of the Christian name is increased by blows of the lash, and it counts as perpetual crowns the number of temporal wounds it has received from lashes.' The prefect says: 'You should rather urge your sister, so that you can free yourself from these injuries, and can be restored to your fiancés with the distinction of your high-born rank.' Secunda replied: 'You are troubling yourself with pointless terrors, and working yourself up with frivolous promises. The glory of virginity is confirmed in us to the extent that we would choose to die rather than to be conquered.' The prefect says to her: 'And if your virginity were taken from you unwillingly, what would you do as regards Christ?' Secunda replied: 'Virginity is revealed to Christ, the Son of God, in a pure heart. A virgin cannot lose her purity, if she does not consent to deviate from what is just. Violence reveals suffering, and suffering makes ready the palm.'

6. 'Observe that you have taken up arms with our agreement, so that you can compel us to delight in what we do not wish, and what we have already begun to curse. Lay on fire, swords, beatings, stones, staves, and switches. I shall count towards the glory of our martyrdom however many punishments you apply. However much violence you inflict, I shall reckon as palms of martyrdom. All torture, which we undergo for the love of Christ, is glory for us. That which does not fear to suffer the destruction of the body for the sake of purity of mind cannot be called corruptibility. For consent is judged by God, Who loves unsullied intention.' Then the prefect ordered them to be confined to a dark room, filled with the stench of excrement. But when this had been arranged, that stench gave off the odour of incense, and not any kind of reek, but rather provided the nostrils with a delightful sensation. And the darkness was overcome as if it were midday, nor could the shadows dominate there, where the creator of darkness, having seen the light of God, was being conquered. They were then ordered to be taken away from there, and to be enclosed in baths, and to be cast into a boiling cauldron, (the temperature of) which was not controlled; but when the men who had put them there went in after two hours, they found the cauldron cold and the (boiling) water evaporated.

7. On hearing this the prefect was astounded, and ordered them to be taken out and thrown into the middle of the Tiber, with the one stone tying both their necks together. They remained submerged with this stone for nearly half

an hour. And then they emerged higher up the river, dressed in dry clothing, announcing the Lord's triumph and chanting Christ's glory. When this was reported to the judge, the prefect said to Count Archesilaus: 'These women whom you handed over to me—either they are overcoming us with magic spells, or holiness does truly reign in them. Whereupon I now hand them back to you, just as you handed them over to me, so that they may either receive their sentence, or avoid it, as you judge best.'¹²

8. Then Archesilaus ordered them to be taken into a wood on the Via Cornelia, at the tenth mile from Rome, on an estate which is called *Buxus* ('The Box Tree'), and for one of them to be decapitated, the other to be beaten to death, and for their bodies to be left to be devoured by wolves. But the Lord's grace was not lacking for believers in Christ, even dead ones. And so the matron, Plautilla, on whose estate these (executions) had taken place, sees them (in a vision) sitting in a bridal chamber, covered with jewels and saying to her: 'Plautilla, cease from the disgrace (of worshipping) idols, and abandon your wicked unbelief; and, believing in Christ, come to your estate, and you will find our bodies; and you will bury them there, just where you find them.' Plautilla got up and went to the place, and, finding the bodies of the holy virgins without the stench (of decay) or any sign of their wounds, she worshipped and believed (in Christ), and constructed a mausoleum for the virgins of Christ.¹³ In this place the advantages of their prayers display a great bounty of miracles, to the praise and glory of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who, with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever and ever. They suffered martyrdom on 11 July.

¹² As a result of legislation passed by Constantine in 331, senior members (*comites*) of the imperial *consistorium* were given authority to conduct criminal trials (*cognitiones*), with the implication that they were also empowered to pass capital sentences. See Peachin, *Iudex vice Caesaris*, esp. pp. 191–4. In this case, Archesilaus, who was a *comes* (c. 1), evidently had such authority (though the ascription of this authority to a *comes* of the mid third century is purely anachronistic); what is not clear is why the urban prefect (Junius Donatus) did not himself pass sentence.

¹³ On the sanctuary of SS. Rufina and Secunda at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia, see n. 3. The church was in the ancient diocese of *Silva Candida* and was arguably constructed by Pope Julius I (337–52); it was in any case restored by Pope Hadrian I (772–95): see *LP*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 508; Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, pp. 161–2: 'He renewed with great care SS. Rufina and Secunda's basilica at the *episcopium* of *Silva Candida*.' On the diocese of *Silva Candida*, see the *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII.11), p. 445 with n. 22.

XXXII

SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus

c.600 × c.650; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus (Via Nomentana, seventh mile); the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia); and the basilica and cemetery of Bassilla/Hermes (Via Salaria Vecchia)

This *passio* concerns three saints—Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus—who were possibly martyrs, and who were buried in a catacomb at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana.¹ In order to aggrandize the prestige of these local saints, the author of the *passio* identified an otherwise unknown saint named Alexander with the pope of that name, whose pontificate (c.110–c.115) fell during the principate of Trajan;² the *passio* accordingly became an account of violent persecution of Christians at the hands of one of Trajan's magistrates, and of the eventual martyrdom of Pope Alexander and two priests, Eventius and Theodulus, whom he met in prison.

The narrative is as follows. In the days of Pope Alexander and the emperor Trajan, Hermes, the urban prefect, was a Christian, as were his family and his household of 1,250 slaves, whom he had manumitted and caused to be baptized (c. 1). Trajan then ordered Aurelian, the *comes utriusque militiae*, to kill all Christians; but Trajan then providently died, and when Aurelian arrived in Rome, he arrested Hermes and Pope Alexander (c. 2). Hermes was detained in the house of the tribune Cyrinus, with whom he discussed the nature of Christian belief (c. 3). Cyrinus declared that he was prepared to consider conversion, provided that Alexander could demonstrate Christ's power by escaping from the chains by which he was being held in prison,

¹ Listed *BHL* 266 and *CPL* 2160; see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 220–1; *BSS* I, cols. 792–8 [E. Josi] and 806 [A. Amore]; P. A. B. Llewellyn, 'The Passions of S. Alexander and his Companions, of S. Hermes and Quirinus: A Suggested Date and Author'; Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 219–23; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 301–3; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 79–83.

² Trajan was emperor from AD 98 to 117; for Pope Alexander, see *LP* (ed. Mommsen, p. 10; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 127; trans. Davis, p. 4), and *EP* I, pp. 213–15 [F. Scorza Barcellona]. The precise dates of Alexander's pontificate are unknown, but fell between 109 and 116.

and coming that evening to the house of Cyrinus (c. 4). That night, an angel in the guise of a small boy appeared to Alexander in prison, and led him to the house of Cyrinus (c. 5). Hermes reminded Cyrinus that the conditions which he had set had now been met (c. 6). Hermes then explained to Cyrinus the reasons why he himself had been converted to Christianity by Alexander, namely that he [Alexander] had been able to resuscitate Hermes' dead son (c. 7). Cyrinus asked to be baptized, but only on the condition that Alexander also cure his daughter, Balbina, of an all-engrossing tumour on her throat; Alexander asked Cyrinus to bring his daughter to the prison cell, to which Alexander was proposing to return (c. 8). An hour later Cyrinus returned to the prison and found Alexander miraculously imprisoned in his cell; Cyrinus brought his daughter, and asked Alexander to pray for him; Alexander instructed him to release all prisoners in the prison, and to put the collar, by which he was bound, around his daughter's neck; and this caused the tumour to heal (c. 9). Among the twenty prisoners who were released were two priests, named Eventius and Theodulus; Alexander arranged for them to baptize all the remaining prisoners (c. 10). Before the ceremony of baptism, Alexander delivered a sermon to the prisoners on the miraculous nature of Christ (c. 11). The prisoners all became believers, and were baptized by Eventius and Theodulus (c. 12). When this was reported to Aurelian, he summoned Cyrinus, who told him that Hermes and Alexander were remaining in their prison cells awaiting martyrdom (c. 13). Aurelian ordered Cyrinus' tongue to be cut out, and for him to be tortured and then decapitated; Christians buried his body in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, but his daughter, Balbina, persevered in her virginity; meanwhile, Hermes was also decapitated on the orders of Aurelian, and buried by his sister, Theodora, in a cemetery on the Via Salaria Vecchia, while the remaining prisoners who had been baptized were placed in an old ship, taken out on the high seas, and drowned (c. 14). Aurelian then summoned Alexander, and asked him to explain the mysteries of Christian belief (c. 15). Aurelian soon tired of Alexander's expositions, and began threatening tortures (c. 16). Aurelian had him raised on the rack, raked with claws and burned with torches; Aurelian's wife pleaded with him to stop the torture (c. 17). Alexander was taken down from the rack, and Eventius and Theodulus were brought in for torture; during interrogation, Eventius revealed that he was 81 years old, and had been a Christian for seventy years (c. 18). After burning them in a furnace, Aurelian ordered Eventius and Theodulus to be decapitated, and Alexander to be punctured with sword points (c. 19). After their deaths, the wife of Aurelian, now named Severina, buried the three martyrs on her estate at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana; Aurelian was seized by a sudden fever, and died (c. 20).

Although the focal point of the *passio* is Pope Alexander and his two colleagues, the priests Eventius and Theodulus, the author has expanded his narrative by including the martyrdoms of Cyrinus, the tribune, and Hermes,

the urban prefect. The names of these two additional martyrs were well known in the cemeterial landscape of Christian Rome.

St Cyrinus. The *passio* records that, after his execution, the body of St Cyrinus was buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the Via Appia (c. 14), and this is confirmed by the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries such as the *Notitia ecclesiarum*: 'there [i.e. in the cemetery of Praetextatus] you will find St Urban, bishop and confessor, and in another place, Felicissimus and Agapitus, martyrs and deacons of Sixtus, and in a third place, Cyrinus the martyr' (Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661); the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' simply lists Cyrinus in the company of Agapitus and Felicissimus (Appendix IV (c) [§11], p. 666). The author of the *passio* does not specify the calendar date on which the burial took place; however, the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* contains the following entry against 30 April: 'Rome, in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, the burial of Bishop Cyrinus' (Appendix III, p. 652). The present text provides no grounds for thinking that Cyrinus was a bishop; and there may well be grounds for doubting that he was a martyr. In 1908, a fifth-century inscription was found in the same cemetery, concerning someone named Cyrinus who was specifically stated to be a 'confessor',³ but not a martyr. Agostino Amore suspected, no doubt rightly, that the identification of Cyrinus as a martyr was entirely due to the author of the *passio*;⁴ his use of Cyrinus as an additional character in his narrative possibly derives from his familiarity either with the cemetery of Praetextatus itself, or with one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries.

St Hermes. According to the *passio*, St Hermes was 'buried on the Via Salaria Vecchia, not far from Rome, on 28 August' (c. 14). This same information is found in—and may ultimately derive from—the entry for 28 August in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354: 'Hermes, in the cemetery of Bassilla, on the Via Salaria Vecchia' (Appendix I, p. 635); it is repeated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against the same date: 'Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in the cemetery of Bassilla, Hermes' (Appendix III, p. 656). The site of the martyr's burial became the object of veneration at least from the time of Pope Damasus, who composed an epigram for the saint, several fragments of which, in classic Filocalian lettering, were discovered during excavations in 1932 and 1940.⁵ The epigram is as follows:

³ See ICUR V, no. 13876, and R. Kanzler, 'Relazione ufficiale degli scavi eseguiti dalla Commissione di archeologia sacra nelle Catacombe romane (1907–1909)', *Nuovo bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 15 (1909), 117–35, at 121, with pl. I, no. 2.

⁴ Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 182: 'è logico allora concludere che realmente nel cimitero di Pretestato era sepolto e venerato al 30 aprile un Quirino 'non martire', di cui niente sappiamo, e dichiarato martire dall'autore della *passio*.'

⁵ E. Josi, 'Scoperta di due frammenti del carne damasiano in onore di S. Ermete', *RACr* 9 (1932), 147–50, and *idem*, 'Scoperta d'un altare e di pitture nella basilica di S. Ermete', *RACr* 17 (1940), 195–208.

Once upon a time, as report has it, Greece sent you:
 you exchanged your homeland with blood, and love of (Christ's) law
 made you a citizen and a brother: having suffered (martyrdom) for His name
 you now serve the altars of Christ as the Lord's resident.
 I ask, great martyr, that you countenance the prayers of Damasus.⁶

The saint's burial is noted in all three seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, in the *Notitia ecclesiarum*: 'Then you go south on the Via Salaria [Vecchia] until you come to St Hermes' (Appendix IV (a) [§ 2], p. 660); likewise *De locis sanctis martyrum*: 'And from there, towards the west, appears the basilica of St Hermes, where the martyr himself lies deep in the ground' (Appendix IV (b) [§12], p. 664); and the 'Malmesbury Itinerary': 'There, next to the road, St Hermes lies in peace' (Appendix IV (c) [§4], p. 665). The basilica of St Hermes, which was constructed over the tomb of the martyr himself, has been known since Bosio in the seventeenth century, and was illuminated by a series of excavations during the twentieth century, the latest of which took place during the 1970s.⁷ It is identified as a semi-hypogean basilica lying deep within the catacombs of St Bassilla, and has been described by Richard Krautheimer as the earliest basilica of large proportions contained in a Roman catacomb having the characteristics of a typical hypogean basilica.⁸ The church itself measures roughly 13 m. × 7 m., and terminates in a semicircular apse; it is reached by a long staircase. The cemetery of Bassilla dates from the third century, but the basilica of St Hermes was probably the work of Pope Damasus, judging from the fragments of the tablet found within it, and was modified and extended by Pope Pelagius II (579–90),⁹ and subsequently restored by Pope Hadrian I (772–95).¹⁰ According to Einhard, Pope Gregory IV (827–44) transferred the

⁶ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 195–6 [no. 48]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 172–3; trans. Appendix II (u), p. 648; and see also *ICUR* X, no. 26669. The epigram is preserved solely in the Fourth Lorsch *sylloge* (*Laureshamensis Quarta*): ed. de Rossi, *ICUR* II, p. 108 [no. 57].

⁷ On the cemetery and basilica of St Hermes, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 568–81; Styger, *Martyrergrüfte* I, pp. 229–34; Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, pp. 195–208 with pl. XXIX; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 115–19; L. Spera, 'Cantieri edilizi a Roma in età carolingia: gli interventi di Papa Adriano I (772–95) nei santuari delle catacombe. Strategie modalità di intervento', *RACr* 73 (1997), 185–254, at 196–207; *eadem*, 'S. Hermetis cymiterium, basilica, monasterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 61–5, with figs. 58–70; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 23–4.

⁸ Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, p. 207: 'È infatti la prima aula ecclesiastica di vaste proporzioni contenuta in una catacombe romana che mostri già distinte le caratteristiche di una vera e propria basilica cimiteriale'.

⁹ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 160; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 309; trans. Davis, p. 63: 'He built the cemetery of St Hermes the martyr'. As Amore points out (*I martiri di Roma*, p. 23), the word 'cemetery' (*cymiterium*) here must signify 'basilica'; the same point is made by P. De Santis, 'La terminologia relativa ai luoghi di culto nel *Liber pontificalis*. Da Pietro a Pelagio II', *Vetera Christianorum* 38 (2001), 41–75, at 54–8, followed by Spera, in *LTUR. Suburbium* III, p. 64.

¹⁰ *LP*, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 509; Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 164: 'He renewed on a wondrous scale the basilica of the cemetery of the martyrs SS. Hermes, Protus and

remains of St Hermes to the intra-urban church of St Marcus.¹¹ It is clear, in any case, that St Hermes was a well-attested Roman martyr, perhaps the victim of one of the third-century persecutions, who was venerated in a well-known basilica on the Via Salaria Vecchia. Whether he was an urban prefect who had converted to Christianity, as the author of the *passio* describes him, is unknown and unlikely, particularly if, as we learn from the epigram of Damasus, he was of Greek origin (in which case it is probable that he was a slave). What is more likely is that the author of the *passio* simply co-opted this well-known Roman martyr, in order to enhance his narrative of the martyr whom he identified as Pope Alexander.

SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus. In the final chapter of the present *passio*, we are told that Severina buried the three martyrs on her estate at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, and that their feast day is celebrated on 3 May (c. 20). Although no such commemoration is found in the *Depositio martyrum*, the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry for 3 May: 'Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, the deaths of SS. Eventius, Alexander, Theodulus' (Appendix III, p. 653), and this commemoration is repeated against the same date in the Gregorian sacramentaries: 'natale SS. Alexandri, Euenti et Theoduli' (Appendix V (d), p. 671). Note that in these entries Alexander is not identified as a pope. Leaving aside the present *passio*, the earliest source to identify Alexander as pope is the 'Malmesbury Itinerary', of (probably) the mid-seventh century, which has the following entry: 'At the seventh mile of the same road [Via Nomentana] rests the holy pope Alexander, with Eventius and Theodulus' (Appendix IV (c) [§5], p. 665). The location of the cemetery in question at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana was first identified in 1854 at a farm named 'Coazzo', through excavations conducted by Enrico Stevenson and Mariano Armellini (two students of G. B. de Rossi who subsequently became very distinguished authorities in the field of palaeo-Christian archaeology), and subsequent excavation at the site has greatly clarified the original findings,¹² notably the recent work by Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai.¹³ The work of identification was

Hyacinth, and Bassilla'. Cf. discussion by Spera, 'Cantieri edilizi a Roma in età carolingia', pp. 196–207.

¹¹ Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 24.

¹² Of earlier studies, note in particular O. Marucchi, *Il cimitero e la basilica di S. Alessandro al settimo miglio della Via Nomentana* (Rome, 1922); *idem*, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 412–23; G. Belvederi, 'La basilica di S. Alessandro'; and P. Testini, 'Strutture murarie e fasi costruttive del santuario dei martiri nella catacomba di S. Alessandro a Roma', in *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie* (Vatican City, 1969), I, pp. 711–38, and II, pls. CCCLIX–CCCLXXI.

¹³ Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Santuario martiriale e territorio nella diocesi di "Nomentum"'; *idem*, 'Cimiteri paleocristiani e insediamenti', pp. 113–14 and 116–17, with figs. 2–3; and esp. *idem*, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 202–413. There are brief syntheses by Fiocchi Nicolai and Anna Maria Nieddu in *Santuari d'Italia: Lazio*, ed. Boesch Gajano et al., pp. 61–4 (with figs. 3–4, 7–8 and 20) [Fiocchi Nicolai] and 239–40 [Nieddu].

greatly aided by a statement by the author of the *passio*, to the effect that when Severina buried the bodies of the three martyrs, she 'placed Eventius and Alexander in one tomb, and buried Theodulus alone in another place' (c. 20). The site itself is a large cemeterial complex, with the remains of an above-ground basilica;¹⁴ the tomb of SS. Eventius and Alexander has been identified as lying beneath the altar of the basilica in the area designated by archaeologists as *M* (*t* 1), with that of Theodulus identified as *T* (*t* 2).¹⁵ The original sanctuaries were subsequently enlarged and elaborated, so as to facilitate access, by means of a new enlarged staircase: no doubt as a result of the fame accorded to the site by the present *passio*.

The *passio* is a striking illustration of how the cult of a local and otherwise unknown saint, perhaps a martyr, could be enhanced by the work of a hagiographer who did not scruple to identify the local saint with a famous figure of the past, in this case Pope Alexander, and then associate him with other, better-known, Roman martyrs. The fact that in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' this St Alexander, buried at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, is identified with the synonymous pope, indicates that the *passio* was composed before the mid seventh century, and that the identification expressed in the itinerary derives from the *passio* rather than vice versa.

Text. The *passio* of SS. Alexander, Eventius, and Theodulus enjoyed a very substantial circulation in manuscript: *BHLms* lists over one hundred and twenty manuscripts, of which two date from the ninth century and five from the tenth. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Maii* I [1680], pp. 375–9.

1. The fifth successor of St Peter the apostle in the see of the church of Rome was Alexander, a man of incomparable holiness; he was young in years, but mature in his faith. Heavenly grace had bestowed upon him the true affection of the entire populace, to the point that he had even converted the greater part of the Roman senate to the Lord, and had also baptized Hermes, the urban prefect, together with his wife and sister and children, as well as 1,250 slaves, with their wives and children. On Easter Sunday he [Hermes] first gave them all their freedom, and then had them baptized. Afterwards, when they had been given their freedom, he gave many gifts to them.

¹⁴ There is detailed description of the cemetery by Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 223–70 ('Il cimitero sotterraneo').

¹⁵ The identification was first made by Belvederi, 'La basilica di S. Alessandro [I]', pp. 199–200; but see esp. Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 271–321 with figs. 248–301 ('Le tombe dei martiri Evezio, Alessandro e Teodulo e la creazione del primo santuario'), esp. 271–80, with figs. 248–50 (*t* 1) and figs. 251–4 (*t* 2); and see the excellent ground plan of the cemetery drawn by Fiocchi Nicolai and printed as pl. IV.

2. When notice of these activities reached the Emperor Trajan, he sent Aurelian, the *comes utriusque militiae*¹⁶ from Seleucia in Isauria,¹⁷ (with orders) to kill all Christians; whereupon, through God's will, Trajan died that same year. And when Aurelian entered Rome, the entire senate offered him their obedience, since they thought he was the Emperor Trajan.¹⁸ Immediately as he entered Rome, the high priests of the temples came to him, and, reporting to him what had happened in misleading words, they aroused the anger of Aurelian to such a degree that he placed Hermes, the urban prefect, in chains, and also committed Pope Alexander to prison: whereupon there was a great insurrection of the Roman populace. For some shouted that Alexander should burn alive; others were saying that Hermes, who had turned so many thousands of men from the worship of the gods, should be burned alive, for he had made them abandon the temples and smash each statue of their tutelary deities in their own homes.

3. And so as Hermes, the urban prefect, was being detained in chains in the residence of Cyrinus, the tribune, Cyrinus says to him: 'What reason is there that you, a senator, occupying an imperial appointment, should not only wish to reduce yourself to this disgrace, but even, dismissed from the prefecture, should bear with equanimity the fact that you are burdened with chains?' St Hermes said: 'I did not lose the prefecture, but exchanged it: for earthly honour is taken from the earth and altered, whereas heavenly honour subsists in eternal distinction.' Cyrinus says to him: 'I am astonished that so wise a man can descend to such stupidity, to the point that you believe there is something which will exist beyond this life, when the ashes of the human body are reduced to nothing, so that not even the bones remain.' Hermes said: 'I too used to ridicule these things in bygone years, and used to say that this earthly life had value.' Cyrinus says to him: 'Give me proof, if it is as you believe, and I too will believe.'

4. Hermes said: 'St Alexander, who is detained in chains, taught me this.' Hearing this, Cyrinus began to curse Alexander, saying: 'My lord, Hermes,

¹⁶ The correct title of the position held by Aurelian was *magister utriusque militiae* ('Master of Foot and Horse', i.e. infantry and cavalry), who was the supreme military commander of the Roman field armies (Jones, *LRE*, p. 342). However, in certain provinces, including Isauria, the field armies were commanded by a *comes rei militaris* (*ibid.* pp. 376, 609). (The author of the *passio* has apparently conflated the two titles; and note that, in any case, it is a gross anachronism to ascribe such a title to an officer of the early second century: such titles did not come into use before the fifth century when, for example, Flavius Aetius, three times consul, was *magister utriusque militiae*.) It is perhaps worth noting that in 359 a church council was held at Seleucia on the Calycadnus (see following note); the president of the council was assisted by one Lauricius, the *comes rei militaris* of Isauria (*ibid.* p. 118).

¹⁷ The reference is presumably to the town of Seleucia on the river Calycadnus (*ad Calycadnum*), which is located in the province of Isauria (corresponding to the modern town of Silifke in south central Turkey); see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 66 (D4).

¹⁸ That a military commander could assume the role of emperor would be unthinkable in an early second-century context, but would seem less improbable in seventh-century Italy.

distinguished sir, take back your prefecture, come to your senses; take back your property, take back your household, and the furnishings of your house. My lord Aurelian, *comes utriusque militiae*, sent me for this purpose, that, if you should wish to sacrifice, you would not be stripped of your prefecture, so that you could even take revenge on those who, in their hostility to you, are reviling your misfortunes.’ Hermes said: ‘You did not permit me to speak to you, yet you wished (to hear) what I was saying?’ Cyrinus says to him: ‘I questioned you, saying, “Give me proof that I may rightly believe you”, and you gave me the name of a magician, whom I have in custody, confined to the depths of prison; and so, as soon as you mentioned the name of a wicked man, through whom you were deceived, I could no longer listen to you. For I see you like a country hick seduced by a juggler, who tricks both himself and you, a wretched man placed in chains and darkness, and one who is perhaps to be burned in flames for his sins. But if he can do anything, let him free himself and you.’ Hermes said: ‘The Jews said to my Lord, Jesus Christ, when He was hanging on the Cross, “If He can do anything, let Him get down from the cross, and we will believe Him”. He of course, if He had not recoiled from their feelings, filled as they were with the filth of perfidy, and had seen that they truly wished to believe, would without doubt have got down.’ Cyrinus said: ‘If what you say is true, I will go to him and say, “If you wish that I believe you to be a true herald of God, and the god whom you worship to be the true God, I shall either find you with Hermes, or Hermes with you”, and (then) I will believe everything which you say to me.’ Hermes said, ‘So be it.’ Cyrinus says to him: ‘I shall now go and triple the chains and guards on him, and I shall say to him that I will find him with you at dinner-time; and if he can do this, I will believe everything he can teach me during the entire night.’

5. And when Cyrinus the tribune had gone and had said this to St Alexander, and had trebled the guards and chains on him, Alexander fell to prayer, and said: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Who made me sit on the cathedra of St Peter Your apostle, grant that You send to me, without suffering, Your angel, who will take me in the evening to Your servant Hermes, and bring me back here again next morning, without anyone realizing until I get back here.’ At the first watch of night a boy arrived there, taking a burning torch into the prison cell, and said to St Alexander: ‘Follow me.’ But he replied: ‘(I swear) by the living Lord Jesus Christ, that if you do not get down on bended knees with me and say the prayer of my Lord Jesus Christ, I shall not follow you.’ And the boy, who did not seem to be more than five years old, getting down on bended knees, prayed for nearly half an hour; and, rising, said the Lord’s Prayer. And taking his hand, the boy led him to the window which was closed, and opened it like a door, and led him to Hermes, in the house of Cyrinus, inside a closed room.

6. Cyrinus, coming afterwards, opened the door to find them praying together with their hands extended and, seeing the burning torch, was

terrified. And when they saw him rendered senseless, they said to him: 'Because you had these conditions in your mind, that, if you were to find us physically together—we who were physically apart even though together in spirit—you would believe: now you see us together; believe! But so that you won't think that we show ourselves to you without shackles for the sake of escape, you shall tomorrow morning find us as you yourself bound us; but this is done more for the sake of your own liberation, so that you may believe that Christ, the Son of God, is the true God, Who listens to those who believe in Him, and you shall receive whatsoever you petition from Him.' Cyrinus says to them: 'Even magical arts could accomplish this.' Hermes replied to him: 'Did we break out of prison by our own volition? But because you said that you would become a believer if you saw us together, behold, you see us—whom you committed to triple guardians! Believe: because our Lord, Jesus Christ, revealed Himself through signs of similar bounty, when He restored sight to the blind, cleansed those with leprosy, cured those with paralysis, put demons to flight, and resuscitated the dead.'

7. <Hermes said:>¹⁹ 'And it came about that I believed in the saintly Pope Alexander in this way. I had an only son who was in extreme pain, who was still attending to his literary studies; he was brought to the Capitol by me and his mother. And when we had sacrificed to all the gods and had given payments to all the high priests, he died. Then his nurse began to upbraid me, saying: 'If you had taken him to the thresholds of St Peter, and had believed in Christ, you would today still have your son safe and sound.' I said to her: 'Given that you yourself became blind, and have not been cured, how is it that can you restore my son to me safe and sound?' And she said: 'As to how I am blind for these past five years—if I were to believe in Christ, my eyesight would be restored to me.' I said to her: 'Go, and believe; and if Alexander should open your eyes for you, I will believe that he can also restore my only son.' Then she went to him [Alexander] at about the third hour [i.e. 9: 00 a.m.]; and behold, at the sixth hour of the day [i.e. at noon] she returned to me cured; and putting his dead son on her shoulders, she started to run in such a way that the young men and boys could scarcely follow her. When she came to Alexander, she cast him [the son] down before his feet, saying, 'My lord, let the blindness return to me, so long as this boy be restored to life.' Then St Alexander said to her, 'Christ will truly resuscitate this boy in such a way that He will not deprive you of the eyesight which He previously granted to you.' And when, after saying a prayer, he had cured him, and coming himself [Alexander] to me he had returned my son alive and well, I immediately threw myself at his feet, and asked him to make me a Christian; and from that day onwards I believed in Christ. I appointed Alexander as tutor

¹⁹ The text printed by the Bollandists does not indicate who is speaking here; since it is evidently Hermes, some such wording as *Hermes dixit* appears to have fallen out.

for my son, and I handed over to him the entire patrimony of the boy's dead mother; I added something of my own, but the rest, however, I gave to my slaves, who had become Christians with me, together with their freedom, and whatever was left over I gave to the poor. Now, however, placed in readiness [for death] I do not fear confiscation, nor do I fear the assault of a mere man who is himself to die, believing that I have a share with those who have arrived at the crown of martyrdom for Christ's name.'

8. As he heard these things, Cyrinus threw himself at their feet, and began to say: 'Let Christ acquire my soul through you in this manner. I have a grown daughter, and I wish to give her to a man; she has a beautiful face, but her neck is disfigured by an all-engrossing tumour. Make her well, and I will bestow all my wealth on her, and confess Christ in your company.' St Alexander said to him: 'Go and bring her quickly to me in the prison, and take the collar from my neck, and place it on her, and make her keep wearing the collar, and tomorrow you will find her cured.' Cyrinus said to him: 'And since you are here in my house, how am I to find you in prison?' St Alexander replied to him: 'Go quickly, since the one who brought me to you here will return me there before you arrive.' When he had said this, Cyrinus went out, but he wanted to leave open the room where Hermes was being detained. Pope Alexander and St Hermes said to him: 'Close it as normal.' And although he was unwilling, they compelled him, and he closed it. And when they had said farewell to each other in their prayers, behold the little boy with the torch appeared and opened the window for him, saying, 'Follow me'. And within a moment of time he fetched him back to the prison, put the chains back on him, and departed.

9. After an hour, Cyrinus came to the four prison warders whom he had placed in charge of the lower prison; and when he found them awake, and all the cells intact and sealed as he had left them, he opened the door and found St Alexander the pope. Throwing himself at his feet, he began to shout out, saying, 'I beg, my lord, that you pray for me, lest the wrath of God, whose bishop you are, come upon me.' St Alexander said in reply: 'My God does not wish anyone to die, but that sinners be converted. For even when He was placed on the Cross, He prayed for those who had crucified Him.' Prostrating himself, Cyrinus said: 'As you commanded, here is my daughter as your servant.' St Alexander says to him: 'How many persons are imprisoned in this place?' He said: 'About twenty.' St Alexander said to him: 'Ask if there are any persons locked up here for Christ's name.' And when he had made enquiries, he found out and reported to him, saying: 'Eventius, an old priest, is there, and Theodulus, whom they say is a priest come from the East.' Pope Alexander said to him: 'Go quickly, and bring them to me with honour. Yet when you go and come back, take the collar from my neck, and put it on your daughter.' Immediately removing all chains from him, Cyrinus began to kiss the feet of St Alexander, saying, 'Lay your hands on her.' And when he laid on

his hands, Alexander began to ask Cyrinus to leave. As he was leaving, behold, the boy with the torch suddenly appeared, and approached the girl, saying to her, 'Be cured, and remain in your virginity, and I will cause you to see your Bridegroom, Who shed His blood for your love.' When he had said these things, he departed.

10. When Cyrinus, the girl's father, arrived, together with Eventius and Theodulus, the priests, he found his daughter cured, and began to shout out: 'Depart from this gaol, my lord Alexander, lest a fire from heaven come down and consume me while you are tarrying here.' St Alexander says to him: 'If you wish to offer me a reward, urge that all those who are in prison be baptized, so that they become Christians.' Cyrinus replied: 'You Christians are saints, but others of them are house-breakers, some are adulterers, some are evildoers, others are guilty of various crimes.' St Alexander says to him: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven on behalf of sinners, and He Who was born of a Virgin calls all men to forgiveness. Do not hesitate, therefore, but have all of them come to me.' Then Cyrinus addressed all of them in a clear voice: 'Whosoever should wish to become a Christian, so be it; and whoever shall be baptized, he may go free wheresoever he should wish.'

11. And when they had all come to St Alexander, the pope, God opened his mouth and he began to say: 'O my sons, listen and believe. "God Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things which are in them";²⁰ Who sends down lightning and Who thunders, Who destroys and Who gives life, to Whom the sun and moon and stars and clear skies and clouds and rainstorms offer obedience: He sent His Son from the kingdom of heaven through the womb of a Virgin, so that He would be born as a man, and would come to be born—He Who never had a beginning was born from a Virgin! He began to invite the entire race of mankind to believe in Him; but when the Jews were obstinate in their belief, and did not wish to believe in Him, He performed this miracle: dining with them, when wine was lacking at the feast, He converted water into wine;²¹ He likewise began to express the thoughts of men to individual persons; He likewise opened the eyes of the blind, released the mouths of the mute, restored locomotion to those crippled, put demons to flight, cured the suffering and the diseased, and even raised up the dead, commanded the winds, averted storms, walked with footsteps on the waters—and when He had done all these things, and an innumerable multitude was believing in Him, the Pharisees and Jews, prompted by zeal, crucified Him. He did not therefore forbid them from doing so, though He was capable of doing so, because He sought to capture the author of our death. When this was done, He arose from the dead on the third day, and in the presence of many witnesses, He ascended to the heavens, giving the power to His disciples

²⁰ Acts 4: 24.

²¹ The miracle at Cana: John 2: 1–10.

to perform these same miracles. At the end of time He is to come as the Judge, in order to render good to the good, and evil to the evil.²² Accordingly, look to Whom you believe in, and put down your names,²³ that you may become Christians.'

12. And when they all had become believers, he commanded Eventius and Theodulus to lay their hands on them, so as to make them catechumens. After these events, Cyrinus, together with his daughter Balbina and his entire household, was baptized, and all those who were together with them in prison. And the prison was opened for all those who were baptized, and began to become a sort of church.²⁴

13. Then the prison warder went to Aurelian, and reported to him all the things which had happened. Whereupon he ordered in a rage that Cyrinus be brought to him, and said to him: 'I loved you as a son; but you resisted me, having been deceived by Alexander.' Cyrinus says to him: 'I have become a Christian. You wish to kill, you wish to beat people with staves, you wish to burn them, and I shall be no different. For I had all those who were in prison made Christians, and released them, and they did not wish to go anywhere. I asked St Alexander, the pope, and the distinguished senator Hermes, to leave, and they refused; and they are all there in prison, saying: "If we are to die and perish for our sins, by how much more may we offer up our souls for the name of Christ?" But I asked all those who were baptized to leave, and those who were dressed in new white (baptismal) garments,²⁵ because the Christian religion demands this; but they are all remaining there up to now waiting for martyrdom, ready for their execution, like a hungry man ready for a feast. So now begin to do what pleases you.'

14. Then Aurelian had his tongue cut out, saying: 'I remove your tongue, because in your boldness you did not fear to reveal to me your secrets, such that I would order you to be tortured out of your silence on the rack.' Cyrinus said: 'Wretch, unhappy man, liberate your soul, so that eternal punishments do not claim you.' When, stretched out on the rack, he did not give in to the tortures administered by Aurelian, he [Aurelian] ordered them to cut off his hands and feet, and then to decapitate him, and to throw his trunk to the dogs.

²² The speech of Alexander reflects the wording of the so-called 'Old Roman Creed' (R): 'qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit in caelos, sedet ad dexteram patris, unde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos' (Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, p. 21 [no. 12], and J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, pp. 100–4).

²³ The giving of names (*nomendatio*) was the first formal step in the process of baptism; see Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 242.

²⁴ See discussion of this episode by Sessa, 'Domestic Conversions', pp. 100–4.

²⁵ After baptism the reborn Christian was dressed in white baptismal robes (*in albis*), the white signifying purity; see *DACL* I/2, cols. 3118–40 [P. de Puniet], s.v. 'Aubes baptismales'; J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient nach Ursprung und Entwicklung. Verwendung und Symbolik* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1907), pp. 57–92; and Heid, 'Die Taufe in Rom', p. 247.

The Christians seized his body and buried it on the Via Appia, in the cemetery of Praetextatus;²⁶ but his daughter, St Balbina, persevered in her holy virginity. St Alexander said to her, as she was frequently kissing the collar through which she had been healed, 'Stop kissing this collar, but seek out instead the chains of St Peter, and kiss them, and stop kissing my collar.' Having received her assignment, St Balbina went with great eagerness and desire to them [St Peter's chains], and gave them to a woman of senatorial rank (named) Theodora, the sister of Hermes the urban prefect. When he had been decapitated on orders from Aurelian, his sister Theodora recovered his body, and buried it on the Via Salaria Vecchia, not far from Rome, on 28 August. Aurelian ordered all those who had been baptized in prison to be placed in an old ship and taken out to the high seas, and to be drowned there with stones tied around their necks.

15. Then Aurelian ordered St Alexander, the pope, to be brought to him, and he said to him: 'I ask you first to reveal to me all the mysteries of your sect, that I may know why you all seek to be executed, rather than (merely) shackled, for some Christ.' St Alexander said: 'What you ask is sacred, and we are not allowed by Christ to give what is sacred to dogs.' Count Aurelian said: 'Am I therefore a dog?' St Alexander said: 'Would that you were a dog! But what is bad for you is worse even for a dog: for a dog is not sent to the eternal fire because of his evil deeds, but once dead, he dies in body and breath. But a man, who is made in the likeness of God, if he should retreat from the worship of God through wicked deeds, will be subject to eternal torments. Thus that man is deemed guilty before you who would dare to foul the likeness of your image or statue. And you, as a man living in time, inflict temporal punishments on men. But God, Who is eternal, inflicts eternal punishments and eternal flames.' Count Aurelian said: 'If you do not make satisfactory replies to my questioning, know that you are to be treated to beatings.' St Alexander said: 'Tyrant Aurelian, why is it that you seek such things with bold resolution?—and this from me, who fear no one at all, other

²⁶ The burial of a martyr named Cyrinus in the cemetery of Praetextatus is mentioned in the *Notitia ecclesiarum*: 'there [i.e. in the cemetery of Praetextatus] you will find St Urban, bishop and confessor, and in another place, Felicissimus and Agapitus, martyrs and deacons of Sixtus, and in a third place Cyrinus, the martyr' (Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661); see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 181–2, who notes that in 1908 a fifth-century inscription was found in the same cemetery concerning someone named Cyrinus, who was specifically stated to be a 'confessor': see *ICUR* V, no. 13876, and R. Kanzler, 'Relazione ufficiale degli scavi eseguiti dalla Commissione di archeologia sacra nelle Catacombe romane (1907–1909)', *Nuovo bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 15 (1909), 117–35, at 121, with pl. I, no. 2, and Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, p. 297 with fig. 107: 'MR IANVARI . FELicissimi . . . ET COFF QVIRINI . MAIOris . . .', where COFF presumably stands for 'Confessores'. Amore concluded that the Cyrinus in question was indeed originally a confessor, and that it was the author of the present *passio*—who was apparently familiar with the tomb in the cemetery of Praetextatus—who declared this Cyrinus to be a martyr (*ibid.* p. 182).

than my King, Who is in heaven? You are wrong, if you think that you can become wise by arguing with Christian men rather than by believing.'

16. Count Aurelian said: 'Let your ingenious argumentation cease. For you are not speaking before just any judge, but before him whose authority the entire world has experienced.' St Alexander said: 'Do not revel in your authority; for the time is nigh when whoever revels in his authority will cease to be powerful.' Count Aurelian said: 'You are permitted to speak, wretch, because your soul is soon to be racked by various kinds of torture.' Alexander said: 'You are not about to do something new: what innocent person ever escaped from your hands? Only those persons are allowed by you to live who denied that they are servants of Lord Jesus Christ. As for me, however, who am certain that I shall never deny my Lord, it is necessary that I be killed by you, just as Hermes, the saintly man, who now is truly distinguished, and Cyrinus, who now is truly a tribune; and all those who recently received the light have journeyed to the sidereal realms.' Count Aurelian said: 'It is this which I seek from you: what is the reason for such a thing, that you all would rather hope to be executed than bound over?' Alexander said: 'I already told you: it is not permitted to give what is sacred to dogs.' Aurelian said: 'And am I a dog? Let words cease, because beatings are at hand.' Alexander said: 'I do not fear these beatings, which pass in time, and find their end with swiftness; but I fear those punishments which you do not fear.'

17. Then Aurelian, enraged, ordered him to be lifted up on the rack, and to be raked with claws and afflicted with torches. And when he had done this for some time, and that man was making no sound, Aurelian said to him: 'Why are you silent?' St Alexander said: 'Because in a time of prayer a Christian speaks with God.' Aurelian says to him: 'Reply to everything which I ask you, and I shall have the beatings stopped.' St Alexander said: 'Fool, I rebuke you, because I care nothing for your cruelty.' Count Aurelian said: 'Reflect that you are thirty years old. Why do you wish to lose your youthful years?' St Alexander said: 'Would that you would not lose your soul!' And while he was hanging on the rack, his wife [i.e. the wife of Aurelian] sent to Aurelian, saying: 'Free yourself, and release this holy man Alexander, because you too are to die an evil death, and you will leave me a widow.' Aurelian said: 'Is he your friend, and for this reason you speak such words on his behalf?'

18. When St Alexander was taken down from the rack, Aurelian ordered Eventius and Theodulus to be brought; and, questioning Alexander, he said: 'Tell me, Alexander, who are these men?' Alexander replied: 'Both are holy men, both are priests.' When St Eventius was brought forward, Aurelian said: 'By what name are you known?' St Eventius replied: 'By my fleshly name I am Eventius, by my spiritual name I am a Christian.' Aurelian said: 'And when did you become a Christian?' St Eventius said: 'Seventy years ago, because when I was eleven years old I was baptized, and when I was twenty years old I was

ordained a priest;²⁷ now I am in my eighty-first year, and I have spent this one year in prison in chains, for which I rejoice.' Aurelian said: 'Consider your age. Deny that Christ is your God, and I shall make you my friend, and make you a rich man and a count.' Eventius said: 'Where is your understanding, and where is your intelligence? I thought that you knew something; but you are blind at heart and cannot see the things which are God's. Wherefore, wretch, recognize, even if at a late moment, that you are a mortal man; do penance, and believe that Christ, the Son of God, is the true God, so that you may discover His mercy.' Then Aurelian had him removed, and ordered Theodulus to be brought in, and said to him: 'You are Theodulus, who have reckoned my orders at naught?' St Theodulus said: 'Even you yourself I shall reckon at naught—you who torture the saints of God with these torments. For what did St Alexander do, that you should afflict him with such torments?' Aurelian said: 'Will you be immune (from torture)?' Theodulus said: 'I believe in the mercy of my God, because I shall not be separated from the community of His holy martyrs.'

19. Then Aurelian ordered a furnace to be stoked up, and ordered Alexander and Eventius to be bound back to back, and thus to be thrust into the burning fire. But he ordered Theodulus to stand in front of the furnace, so that, terrified, as it were, by their suffering, he might consent to sacrifice to the idols. But St Alexander shouted out: 'Brother Theodulus, come here quickly, and be with us, because that fourth one, who appeared amidst the three Hebrew youths (in the furnace), is here with us.' And leaping into the fire, St Theodulus entered the furnace; and giving thanks to God, they all said together, 'You have tested us by fire, Lord, and no wickedness has been found in us.' When this was announced to Aurelian, he moaned in rage, and driven by his anger, he ordered Eventius and Theodulus to be decapitated, but Alexander to be pierced in all his limbs by (sword-) points.

20. And when he had reviled them even though they were dead, a voice suddenly spoke to him from heaven, saying: 'Aurelian, the paradise of delights has been opened for these men whom you are reviling, but for you Tartarus and hell have been opened.' At these words, terror shook Aurelian, and he started to say to Severina, his wife: 'A certain young man came to me with a fiery rod of iron, and he cast it before my feet, saying, "You have, Aurelian, what you wanted." And from that moment I trembled all over, and gave in to

²⁷ Consecration to the priesthood at the early age of 21 is against all tenets of canon law; see *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, ed. R. Naz, 7 vols. (Paris, 1935–65), I, cols. 315–48 [J. Delmalle], s.v. 'age', at cols. 340–1; see in particular the canons of the Council of Neocaesarea (AD 314), 'Presbyter ante .xxx. annorum aetatem non ordinetur, quamvis sit probabilis vitae'. Pope Siricius (384–98) raised the eligible age for consecration to the priesthood to 35. It was not until the early Middle Ages that these strict rules were relaxed; in 751, for example, Pope Zacharias allowed the eligible age to be lowered to 25. But at no time was consecration at the age of 21 permissible by canon law.

fever, and I know not what I shall do: pray for me to your God, Severina, that He forgive me.' But Severina said to him: 'I shall go and bury them myself, so that the same thing doesn't happen to me.' She went along the Via Nomentana to the seventh mile from Rome, to her estate, and placed Eventius and Alexander in one tomb, and buried Theodulus alone in another place.²⁸ All the Roman clergy and the religious men who had come to the funeral remained there. Severina, however, returned home in haste, and found Aurelian speaking gibberish, burning up with fever, and blaming all his misfortunes on himself. Replying to him Severina said: 'You did not wish to listen to my words, and now you shall die an evil death, and shall leave me a widow.' He straightway breathed his last, chewing on his tongue; but Severina his wife dressed herself in haircloth, and lay for a long time on the threshold of the saints whom she herself had buried, until St Sixtus, the bishop,²⁹ came to her from the East; Severina obtained from him that he should be ordained bishop of that estate, and should celebrate mass every day for the martyrs. Accordingly this place has its own priest up to the present day. The feast day of these saints is celebrated with honour and glory on 3 May;³⁰ blessed be God forever and ever. Amen.

²⁸ On the burial of Alexander and Eventius in one tomb, and Theodulus in another, see p. 562 and n. 15.

²⁹ According to the *Liber pontificalis*, the successor of Pope Alexander was Sixtus I (ed. Mommsen, p. 11; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 128; trans. Davis, p. 4); and see *EP* I, pp. 216–17 [F. Scorza Barcellona].

³⁰ The commemoration of these three martyrs on 3 May is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* (Appendix III, p. 653).

XXXIII

SS. Calogerus and Parthenius

c.600 × c.650 (?); relevant to the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia)

The brief *passio* of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius concerns two eunuch brothers, natives of Armenia, who, during the reign of the Christian emperor Philip ‘the Arabian’ (244–9) were engaged by the noble Roman senator Aemilianus to see to the education of his daughter, Calista Anatolia; but after the murder of Philip ‘the Arabian’ by Decius, a savage persecution of Christians led to the arrest and execution of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius in AD 250, and their subsequent burial in the cemetery of Callistus, on the Via Appia.¹

The narrative is as follows. During the principate of Philip ‘the Arabian’, the first Christian emperor, Aemilianus, the consul, likewise a Christian, had a daughter named Anatolia Calista; but Philip was murdered by Decius, who instigated a savage persecution of Christians (c. 1). Aemilianus, on his death-bed, entrusted his daughter and his property to Calogerus and Parthenius, two eunuch brothers; Decius accordingly summoned them and berated them for disbursing the property of Aemilianus to poor Christians, telling them that, if they did not sacrifice, they would be tortured and executed (c. 2). Decius then ordered Libanius, the urban prefect, to torture them; Libanius, sitting in tribunal at the temple of Tellus, interrogated them separately, beginning with Calogerus, who was strung up on the rack and tortured, but proved recalcitrant (c. 3). Libanius asked Parthenius why Calogerus had proved so recalcitrant, and Parthenius replied by giving a lengthy sermon on Christian belief as expounded in the gospels (c. 4). Libanius reasserted his belief in his own god, Jupiter, and was urged by his legal adviser to burn them alive (c. 5). Calogerus and Parthenius were placed in the flames, but when they remained unharmed, the prefect’s agent smashed their heads with a stake, and they expired on 19 May; their bodies were recovered by Christians and buried in

¹ Listed *BHL* 1534 and *CPL* 2174 (note that the *CPL* entry incorporates the *passio* of SS. Anatolia and Victoria, which has been considered a later component of an epic martyr cycle, of which the *passio* of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius might have constituted the first part: see below); for discussion of *BHL* 1534, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 185–6; *BSS* III, cols. 699–700 [A. Amore]; Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 303–5; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 172–5.

the cemetery of Callistus, near the crypt of Pope Sixtus II, on the Via Appia (c. 6).

SS. Calogerus and Parthenius appear to have been genuine Roman martyrs: the date of their martyrdom is recorded as 19 May in the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354: 'Parthenius and Calogerus, in the cemetery of Callistus, in the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian [= AD 304]' (Appendix I, p. 634). The specific attribution of their martyrdom to the second year of the 'Great Persecution' under Diocletian is at striking variance with the present *passio*, which assigns the martyrdom specifically to AD 250 in the principate of Decius. Interestingly, the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* likewise assigns their martyrdom to the principate of Decius: '[19 May] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the deaths of Parthenius <and> Calogerus. Rome, the deaths of Calogerus and Parthenius, eunuchs of the emperor Decius and his wife; when one of them was the *praepositus cubiculi* and the other the *primicerius*, not wishing to sacrifice to idols, they were killed by Decius and lie in peace in the cemetery next to the Via Appia' (Appendix III, p. 653).² The entry for 19 May in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* is one of many 'double' entries in that work; the first element, shorn of the dating to AD 304, may well derive from the *Depositio martyrum*; the second element, which identifies Calogerus and Parthenius as household eunuchs of Decius, is related to, but not derived from, the depiction of the two eunuchs in the present *passio*.³

The burial of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, 'in a crypt in which the venerable body of St Sixtus the pope . . . was placed' (c. 6), is confirmed by one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, the *De locis sanctis martyrum*: 'and next to the same road [Via Appia] is

² The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* contains two further commemorations of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius: against 11 February ('Rome, Calogerus and Parthenius, martyrs') and 18 April ('<Likewise at Rome>, Parthenius, Calogerus') (Appendix III, pp. 651, 652). There has been much inconclusive discussion about the significance of these various dates; de Rossi, for example, argued that 19 May was the date in AD 250 on which the two eunuchs were martyred (as in the *passio*), and 11 February the date in AD 304 on which they were translated (in contradiction of the evidence of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*). But these arguments depend more on wishful thinking than on evidence, and were rejected by Delehaye (*Acta SS., Nouembris II/2*, p. 262), and likewise by Amore (*I martiri di Roma*, pp. 173–4).

³ The author of the double entry concerning Decius went well beyond the warrant of information contained in the *passio*, which, although it identifies Calogerus and Parthenius as eunuchs, does not state that they belonged to the household of Decius, nor that one of them was the Grand Chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*) and the other the Superintendent of chamberlains (*primicerius*) of the imperial household. It is worth noting that in the *passio* of SS. Gallicanus, John and Paul (no. XVIII), of the two eunuchs John and Paul, John was described as the Grand Chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*) and Paul as the Superintendent of chamberlains (*primicerius*): XVIII.1. The author of the double entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* may well have borrowed these titles from this *passio*. In any case, the present *passio* emphatically does not state that Calogerus and Parthenius were eunuchs in the imperial household.

the church of St Sixtus the pope, where he lies in peace... and SS. Calogerus and Parthenius lie in individual tombs' (Appendix IV (b) [§6], p. 663). The individual tombs of the two saints were in the so-called 'Region of Gaius and Eusebius' in the cemetery of Callistus, in a crypt designated *o13* by archaeologists.⁴ The identification of this crypt was confirmed by de Rossi's discovery of a graffito recording the two martyrs' names and (what de Rossi interpreted as) the date of their deposition, 11 February.⁵ The crypt itself (*o13*) contains two individual *loculi* which housed the saints' remains, with a niche designed to hold a lantern: a relatively modest shrine in comparison with those of Popes Gaius (282–95) and Eusebius (309/310), nearby.⁶ But, as far as we know, with the exception of this modest crypt housing the remains of the two martyrs, they were not venerated elsewhere, and it is difficult to imagine what purpose was served in composing a *passio* in their name, especially given the confusion in martyrological sources about when they were martyred. Nevertheless, although the author's purpose in composing this *passio* is unclear, and although his chronology is frequently in error, he deserves some credit for using historical sources, such as Jerome's *Chronicle* and consular lists, to create a seemingly plausible context for the martyrdoms under Decius. Given that the martyrdoms of Calogerus and Parthenius were familiar from the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* and the pilgrim itineraries, the composition of the *passio* may be placed (tentatively) in the first half of the seventh century.

Text. In comparison with many of the texts translated in the present volume, the *passio* of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius seems scarcely to have circulated in manuscript: *BHLms* lists only eleven witnesses, and of these, only one is from a period as early as the tenth century (Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, F. III. 16, written at Bobbio c.900).⁷ The fact that one of the principal actors in the *passio* is named Anatolia Calista has suggested some sort of link with the *passiones* of SS. Victoria and Anatolia (*BHL* 8591d + 418), which are transmitted alongside that of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius in the Turin manuscript. Cécile Lanéry ventured to suggest that the *passio* of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius may have formed the first part of a tripartite

⁴ See Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 213; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 196–203, esp. 200 and 202; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 172–5.

⁵ De Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, II, pp. 210–19, at 211: 'tertio idus Februa(rias) [= 11 February] Parteni martiri Caloceri martiri'; the graffito is also ed. in *ICUR* IV, no. 9543, and printed and discussed by Reekmans, *Le complexe cémétériale*, p. 221, and *idem*, 'Les tombeaux des papes Gaius et Eusèbe', esp. p. 704.

⁶ For illustration of the crypt of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius, see Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 123–6, and Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*, pp. 102–5; for detailed analysis of the shrine, see Reekmans, *Le complexe cémétériale*, pp. 218–23 with pls. XXIV–XXVIII, and (briefly) *idem*, 'Les tombeaux des papes Gaius et Eusèbe', pp. 704–7, with fig. 5.

⁷ On the manuscript, see C. Cipolla, *Codici Bobbiesi della Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino* (Milan, 1907), pp. 154–8, with pls. 67–8, and Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, III, no. 6296.

epic cycle, which was complemented by the *passiones* of SS. Victoria, followed by that of Anatolia, not least because the *passio* of St Victoria (BHL 8591d) begins abruptly with reference to the martyrdoms of Calogerus and Parthenius.⁸ In any case, the hypothetical combined *passio* of SS. Calogerus, Parthenius, Victoria, and Anatolia does not survive in any manuscript; and the *passiones* of SS. Victoria and Anatolia are barely represented in surviving manuscripts (BHLms lists only two witnesses for Victoria, including the aforementioned Turin manuscript, and only six for Anatolia). The interest of the *passio* of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius is the learning of its author, including his use of historical sources such as Jerome and consular lists, and his apparent familiarity with the cemetery of Callistus, on the Via Appia, including the identifiable crypt of the two eunuch martyrs. The text translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Maii* IV [1685], pp. 302–4; I follow their chapter numbering.

1. And so, among the Roman emperors, Philip was the first Christian.⁹ He made his son Philip joint emperor with him.¹⁰ Thus, when he had established the city of Philippopolis in Thrace,¹¹ the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Rome took place with these two emperors reigning.¹² At that time Aemilianus, a senator, was summoned from the provinces of the East; when he arrived at

⁸ Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 304. The *passiones* of SS. Victoria and Anatolia are in Mara, *I martiri*, pp. 172–92 (Victoria) and 192–200 (Anatolia). Note the reference to the martyrdom of SS. Calogerus and Parthenius at the beginning of the *passio* of St Victoria: 'Factum est autem post passionem beatorum martyrum Caloceri ac Parteni, ut illustris vir Titus Aurelius, ad petitionem sanctae Anatoliae', etc. (Mara, *ibid.* p. 172). As the narrative develops, however, it becomes clear that this Anatolia from Piceno is entirely distinct from the Roman Anatolia Calista, of the present *passio*.

⁹ Philip 'the Arabian' (M. Iulius Philippus), emperor 244–9, was so called because he was born at Shahba (SE of Damascus) in the Roman province of *Arabia* (which corresponds more or less to the modern country of Syria). The author's principal source for this and the following historical information is Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius, *Chronicon* [CPG 3494], ed. PL XXVII, cols. 223–508, and R. Helm, *Eusebius Werke* VII, 3rd ed., GCS XLVII (Berlin, 1984).

¹⁰ Jerome, *Chronicon*, s.a. AD 247: 'Philippus Philippum filium consortem regni facit, primusque omnium ex Romanis imperatoribus Christianus fuit' (PL XXVII, cols. 645–6; ed. Helm, p. 217); cf. Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* vii. 20. 2: 'hic primus imperatorum omnium Christianus fuit ac post tertium imperii eius annum millesimus a conditione Romae annus impletus est' (CSEL V, p. 478).

¹¹ Jerome, *Chronicon*, s.a. AD 251: 'Philippus urbem nominis sui in Thracia construxit' (PL XXVII, cols. 645–6; ed. Helm, pp. 217–18). In spite of what Jerome says, the Philippopolis in question was not in Thrace, but in Philippus's hometown of *Thraconitis* (modern Shahba, south-east of Damascus) in the Roman province of *Arabia* (which corresponded roughly to modern Syria, not to modern Saudi Arabia), as we learn from Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, c. 28 (trans. Bird, p. 29: 'And so Marcus Iulius Philippus, an Arab from Thraconitis, took his son Philip as partner, settled affairs in the east, founded the town of Philippopolis in Arabia, and came to Rome with his son'). For the location of Philippopolis in *Arabia* (Shahba in modern Syria), see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 69 (E4). But there was also a Philippopolis in the Roman province of *Moesia Inferior* (now Plovdiv in Bulgaria): Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 22 (B6). Jerome simply confused the town in Arabia with that in Moesia Inferior.

¹² The date of the 1,000th anniversary of the founding of Rome corresponds to AD 247.

Rome, he assumed the consulship.¹³ This Aemilianus, before he resigned this office, discovered the bounty of life. He left behind him a daughter named Calista, whose *praenomen* was Anatolia. Philip the Elder was killed at Verona by Decius, and Philip the Younger at Rome,¹⁴ both of them devout Christians. Decius was elevated to become emperor, a sacrilegious man who had killed both the previous emperors [Philip and his son]. Because of them he conceived a hatred of Christians; he killed the bishop of Rome, Sixtus (II), and his venerable archdeacon Laurence.¹⁵ He also sent to Jerusalem, and ordered that Alexander, the bishop of that church, be killed; and also St Babylas, the priest of the church of Antioch:¹⁶ the madman thought that if he removed these men, who were the heads of their churches, the entire body of the church would die. But this insane man, infected with the venom of his own folly, increased the glory of the holy Christian martyrs, and in his cruelty killed his own soul. For the saints, although they were thought to be vanquished by execution, conquered all the more by being killed: scorning all temporal things, they hastened to the eternal and perpetual life, scorning this transient one.

2. Accordingly, Calogerus and Parthenius were arraigned before Decius the king,¹⁷ because Aemilianus the consul, on his deathbed, had entrusted his daughter to these, his eunuchs. When the king had sent for them and had them brought into his presence, he said to them: 'I hear that you have become irreligious Christians, and have squandered all the inheritance of Aemilianus the consul, and have so deceived his daughter, that she rejoices that you exhaust the riches left to her by her father, and distribute them among persons

¹³ Fulvius Aemilianus was consul in 244, and a second time in 249. The information concerning Aemilianus, who was a Christian as well (see c. 2), is not found in Jerome's *Chronicon*; it is introduced here to provide a context for the story of Anatolia Calista and her two eunuchs, Calogerus and Parthenius.

¹⁴ Jerome, *Chronicon* s.a. AD 251 (253): 'Philippus senior Veronae, Romae iunior occiditur' (PL XXVII, cols. 647–8; ed. Helm, p. 218).

¹⁵ Eusebius, *HE* vi. 39. 1; Jerome, *Chronicon* s.a. AD 254: 'Decius cum Philippos, patrem et filium, interfecisset, ob odium eorum, in Christianos persecutionem movet: qua diaconus Laurentius Romae martyrium duxit' (PL XXVII, cols. 647–8; ed. Helm, p. 218); cf. Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* vii. 21. 2: 'ad persequendos interficiendosque Christianos septimus post Neronem feralia dispersit edicta plurimosque sanctorum ad coronas Christi de suis crucibus misit' (CSEL V, p. 479). The author of the *passio* has added the name of Pope Sixtus II (257–8) to that of Laurence given in Jerome: the fact that he refers to Laurence as *archidiaconus* suggests that this additional information derives from the *passio* of Polychronius and others (above, no. XVI), where Laurence is consistently described as Sixtus's *archidiaconus* (XVI.13, 18–19, 29). Note that the dating here is spurious: the emperor Decius had been killed in 251, after a reign of only two years: seven years before Sixtus and Laurence were martyred in AD 258.

¹⁶ Jerome, *Chronicon*, s.a. AD 254: 'Alexandro Hierosolymorum episcopo apud Caesaream Palaestinae ob martyrium interfecto, et Antiochiae Babyla' (PL XXVII, cols. 647–8; ed. Helm, p. 218); on the deaths of these two bishops, see Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, II, pp. 681 (Babylas of Antioch) and 1000 (Alexander of Jerusalem).

¹⁷ On the Romans' reluctance to describe their emperors as *rex*, see no. I (above, p. 52, n. 32).

of low estate.' Calogerus said: 'What was commanded of us by our earthly lord [Aemilianus], we have done'—for Aemilianus the consul was a true Christian, and he left his wealth to be distributed to the poor. Decius, the king, said: 'Get ready to sacrifice to the immortal gods, so that my judgement on you may be softened.' Calogerus said: 'I do not fear your judgement, but that of God: your judgement is of today, and will not exist tomorrow; but the wrath of God will punish with tortures those who worship another god but Him.' Decius said: 'Since you are attractive and wealthy young men, why do you seek to throw away your life, and seek a disgraceful death?' Calogerus said: 'You, who believe that a stone or bronze image is your god, are seeking a disgraceful death. I, however, who believe that God Who reigns has dominion everywhere, will not be able to have a disgraceful death.' Decius said: 'Because if you make sacrifice through the gods and goddesses, I will make you my friends; but if you scorn to do this, I will punish you with various tortures.' Calogerus replied: 'Let him hope to become your friend who does not fear to have as an enemy his God and Lord. For however bitter your friendships are to me, so much the sweeter are your enmities.' Decius said: 'What do you say, Parthenius?' Parthenius replied: 'What Calogerus said, I also say: there is one will and faith in us.' Decius said: 'Therefore this pleases you, that in scorning my commands, you die a grisly death?' Parthenius replied: 'The death which you threaten to inflict on us is our life, and a crown with eternal victory.'

3. Then Decius, enraged, said to Libanius, his prefect:¹⁸ 'Let them be tortured by various punishments, tomorrow morning in your offices (*secretarium*), if they scorn to sacrifice; but if they consent, you both join them to your love, and communicate to them my friendship.' Libanius, therefore, the urban prefect, sitting (in tribunal) near the temple of Tellus,¹⁹ ordered them to be admitted to private audience one at a time. And when Calogerus had entered, Libanius said to him: 'I ordered you to come in out of friendship. If it be pleasing to you that you be a friend, I thank you; if not, I shall punish you according to the law.' Calogerus replied: 'He who wishes to have your friendship incurs divine enmity; and therefore I care nothing about your enmity, because you reconcile me to the love of my God to the extent that I shall be assaulted by the enmity of your anger.' Libanius said: 'The lord our emperor Decius ordered that those who do not sacrifice to the gods should die through various tortures.' Calogerus replied: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal King and True God, said: "Everyone who would sacrifice to idols will

¹⁸ No urban prefect named Libanius is attested in the principate of Decius (see Vigneaux, *Essai sur l'histoire de la praefectura*, pp. 243–4, and Vitucci, *Ricerche sulla praefectura urbi*, pp. 122–3), or in that of Valerian (see the list of urban prefects in the 'Chronographer of 354': *MGH, AA IX*, p. 65).

¹⁹ The site of the tribunals and the *scrinia* of the urban prefecture was the *Secretarium Tellurense*, which, to judge from its name, was located in the vicinity of the temple of Tellus (*aedes Tellus*); see no. VII (p. 198, n. 17).

be destroyed.”²⁰ Libanius said: ‘Let him be strung up on the rack.’ And when he was strung up on the rack, and was being burned with torches and raked with claws, Calogerus said: ‘Did I not say to you, Libanius, that your enmity exalts me, and causes me to acquire greater honour in the sight of my King? For the time being, contemplate more severe punishments: you can butcher my flesh, but you cannot conquer my soul as it strives on behalf of the faith and the truth.’ Libanius, the prefect, said: ‘Because I see that this one, with his recalcitrant mind, hopes for rather than fears blows and tortures, take him away, and bring in his colleague.’

4. When Parthenius had been brought in, Libanius said: ‘Tell me, Parthenius, what is the reason for the intransigence of your brother that, wrung out²¹ with beatings on the rack, seared with flames, and raked with claws, he in no way wished to consent to carry out the orders of our venerable emperor?’ Parthenius said: ‘Although these tortures have an end, those which are prepared for people who sacrifice to idols have no end whatsoever.’ Libanius said: ‘How do you know this?’ Parthenius replied: ‘Christ the Son of God, in order that He might assist mankind, became a man Whom a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, and she remained a Virgin after delivery. Angels, descending from heaven, praising and adoring, revealed to shepherds of flocks that He who was born ‘first of all’²² was placed in a cradle.’²³ Likewise the shepherds, in their adoration, preached in simple faith to their familiars what they had seen and heard taking place around them.²⁴ Likewise the Magi, coming from the [depths] of the East through the sign of a great star, adored Him by offering gold, frankincense, and myrrh as gifts.²⁵ King Herod, when seeking Him among infants, that he might kill Him, and not finding Him, arranged to have killed all infants younger than two years old in the town of Bethlehem.²⁶ God, His Father, Who reigns in the heavens, opening the heavens, marked Him out, saying: “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”:²⁷ you should all obey Him.’ Jesus, overcoming all the temptations of the devil, climbed the mountain, and calling to Him His disciples, began to reveal to them the eternal beatitudes, and the works through which they could achieve glory and the perpetual life.²⁸ After this He began to preach to the Jews and to say that, when their souls left their bodies, if they were fouled with idolatry and fornication, or polluted with human blood, they would be committed to eternal flames; but those which were cleansed of these crimes and other wickednesses, freed from eternal punishments, would enjoy eternal delights. Then the Jews said: “How can you prove this?” The Lord says to them: “Bring

²⁰ Cf. Matt. 15: 13 (‘omnis plantatio quam non plantavit Pater meus caelestis eradicabitur’).

²¹ For the meaning of *exsucatus* (literally ‘sucked out’), see *TLL* V/2, cols. 1941–2, s.v. ‘exsuo’.

²² I Tim. 2: 1 (*primo omnium*).²³ Luke 2: 7.²⁴ Luke 2: 8–20.

²⁵ Matt. 2: 1–12.²⁶ Matt. 2: 16–18.

²⁷ Matt. 3: 17 (‘hic est Filius meus dilectus in quo mihi conplacui’).

²⁸ The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 1–16).

to me your blind and lame, and however many diseased people you have.”²⁹ And when all the blind persons who were there were brought, He restored their sight, and hearing to the deaf, and locomotion to the lame, and sound health to the paralyzed; He cured all illnesses and cast out demons from those obsessed, so that even the impure spirits cried out, “We know that You are the Son of God: do not send us to the abyss.”³⁰ He also commanded the winds and subdued storms with His command,³¹ He walked on the waters of the sea with dry feet,³² and raised up the dead to such a degree that He even recalled to life someone who had been four days in the tomb.³³ And when He had done these things, and had entrusted this power even to His disciples, He said to the Jews: “If you do not believe words, believe miracles at least.”³⁴ But not only did they not believe, but they crucified their own God, Who had frequently been foretold to them by the prophets. When He was crucified and dead, on the third day He arose, and, dining for forty days with his disciples, He asked them even to touch Him, so that they would have no doubt concerning Him, but would remain strong and resolute in His faith. And all the things which He had said to his disciples before His passion, He repeated to them after His resurrection; and He commanded them to preach His faith among all peoples, and to baptize them all in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. After the fortieth day following His resurrection, He ascended the heavens in great majesty, with all the disciples looking on.³⁵ Angels appeared to the disciples as they gazed after Him in astonishment, saying, “Why do you gaze in astonishment at the sky? He is the Lord, the Lord of us all; just as you see Him proceeding to Heaven, so will He return in the end to judge all the world.”³⁶ This, therefore, is our faith in Christ, which is not conquered by tortures, is not overcome by flames or the sword.⁷

5. Libanius, the prefect, said: ‘I now see that my god, Jupiter, is a true god: for your God, just as you assert, was crucified. But Jupiter never put aside his omnipotence, but rather increased it through his commands.’ Then Parthenius said, smiling: ‘Your Jupiter lived like a barbarian, as a paramour of men’s wives, a rapist of children; he was a patricide and also a fratricide, and even used his sister as a wife. If you believe that this is your god, you are to be burned with him in perpetual flames.’ Then the prefect’s legal adviser (*asses-sor*), ripping his tunic, said: ‘Our gods will be angry with us, if these (two Christians) are not burned alive!’

6. Then Libanius the prefect ordered them to be burned alive. But when, placed in the flames, they remained unharmed, the agent, in a rage, seized a burning stake and smashed their heads with it. And they, praising God, gave up their spirit. When the executioner saw that they had expired, he approached,

²⁹ Cf. Luke 14: 13, 21.

³⁰ Cf. Luke 8: 31.

³¹ Matt. 8: 26.

³² Matt. 14: 25–6.

³³ The raising of Lazarus (John 11: 1–43).

³⁴ Cf. John 10: 38.

³⁵ Acts 1: 1–9.

³⁶ Acts 1: 10.

in order to signal their death: and immediately the bodies of the saints were carried away by Christians. Libanius had commanded that the bodies be cast unburied into the woods; on their return, those who had killed them reported that they had found no trace whatsoever of their bodies. Then the holy (Calista) Anatolia, whose slaves had carried away the bodies of the saints, buried them herself in a crypt in which the venerable body of St Sixtus the pope—whom the emperor Decius had previously killed—was placed.³⁷ And she buried them with every attention, even to the point of adorning their tombs with porphyry columns.³⁸ In this place the benefits of their martyrdom abound up to the present day. They were from the province of Armenia,³⁹ the sons of one father and mother, Calogerus being the elder, Parthenius the younger in age. They died on 19 May, in the consulship of Decius Augustus and Gratus,⁴⁰ through the mercy of Christ, our God and Lord, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

³⁷ Pope Sixtus II (257–8) was buried in the famous ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus (on the Via Appia), on which see no. IV (p. 141, n. 11).

³⁸ No trace of these porphyry columns was found by de Rossi when he first excavated the crypt in 1859 (see *Roma sotterranea* II, pp. 218–19), and no trace has subsequently been identified in *o13*: Reekmans, *Le complexe cémétériale*, p. 223.

³⁹ From the time of Diocletian onwards, it became customary to employ eunuchs to manage the imperial household; the Grand Chamberlain (*praepositus sacri cubiculi*) in particular came to occupy a position of huge importance in the emperor’s consistory, since he had direct and immediate access to the emperor himself. The eunuchs of the imperial household were usually freed slaves from outside the Empire, from Armenia or Persia (castration was forbidden within the Empire: *Codex Justinianus* iv. 42. 1–2), and they formed a close corps of palace attendants under the supervision of the Grand Chamberlain; see Dunlap, ‘The Office of the Grand Chamberlain’, pp. 178–80 (‘The Imperial Court of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries’) and 180–9 (‘The History of the Office of Grand Chamberlain’); Jones, *LRE*, pp. 566–70; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 172–96 (‘The Political Power of Eunuchs’); and Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassene*, pp. 130–76, with mention of Calogerus and Parthenius at p. 134, n. 20, and a full prosopography of all attested court eunuchs at pp. 181–233. Eunuchs who, like Calogerus and Parthenius, are brothers, figure importantly in several *passiones* of Roman martyrs: Nereus and Achilleus (VIII), Protus and Hyacinthus (IX), John and Paul (XVIII); see De Gaiffier, ‘Palatins et eunuques’, esp. pp. 41–2 on Calogerus and Parthenius, and Boulhol and Cochelin, ‘La réhabilitation de l’eunuque’, pp. 63–70.

⁴⁰ The consuls in AD 250 were Emperor Decius (II) and Vettius Gratus; the accuracy of the reference implies that the author had consulted a consular list.

XXXIV

SS. Serapia and Sabina

c.600 × c.700; relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Sabina (Aventine)

On the Aventine in Rome, there was (and is) a magnificent church, dedicated to St Sabina, dating from the early fifth century; however, the *passio* of St Sabina makes no mention of this church, or of Rome, but concerns a martyr who, together with her companion, Serapia, was executed and buried in the vicinity of Terni in Umbria.¹ How and why these two Umbrian martyrs came to be culted in Rome is a matter of immense complexity, which at present admits of no solution; but because the *passio* concerns a saint venerated at a notable Roman *titulus*-church, whose feast day is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, it is included in the present volume.

The narrative is as follows. During the principate of Vespasian, a Christian woman from Antioch, named Serapia, was living in the house of Sabina, a widowed woman of illustrious senatorial rank, in the town of Vindena in Umbria; because she was a Christian, the local governor summoned Serapia to appear before his tribunal (c. 1). Sabina refused to allow this, and went herself to see the governor, and reproached him for his behaviour (c. 2). The governor mounted a spectacle, and ordered that Serapia be brought there; Sabina followed her and once again upbraided the governor (c. 3). The governor then ordered Serapia to sacrifice to the gods, which she refused to do (c. 4). The governor then ordered her to be handed over to two lascivious Egyptian youths, who were given freedom to use her for sexual purposes, but during the night there was an earthquake, and the youths were paralysed and struck blind (c. 5). When the governor's agents arrived the following morning to find out how the youths had fared, they were found lying lifeless and mute on the ground; when interrogated by the governor, Serapia stated that she had spent the night with the Lord Jesus Christ (c. 6). The two youths were then brought,

¹ The *passio* of SS. Serapia and Sabina is composite, and is listed under two separate numbers in *BHL*: 7586 (corresponding to cc. 1–11 of the present translation) and 7407 (cc. 12–15); cf. also *CPL* 2234. The *passio* is discussed by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 164–5 and 313–18; *BSS* XI, cols. 540–2 [A. Amore]; Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, pp. 125–42; and Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 305–6.

in their paralysed condition, into the presence of Serapia and the governor (c. 7). The governor ordered Serapia to practise her magic on the youths, in order to restore them to health; when she prayed to the Lord, the youths suddenly jumped up, restored to health (c. 8). The youths then reported that, when they had approached Serapia, an angel who was protecting her struck them down; the governor then asked Serapia to explain how she had effected this sorcery (c. 9). The governor tells her that if she will not sacrifice, he will have her beheaded; she replies adamantly that she does not sacrifice to demons (c. 10). He then orders her to be beaten with staves, but a splinter from one of the staves lodges in his eye; he then orders her to be decapitated by sword; she is duly executed on 29 July (c. 11). Sabina recovered Serapia's remains and buried them in a tomb, and then devoted herself to almsgiving (c. 12). The prefect, Helpidius, arrived and asked the governor what had taken place with Sabina, and then interrogated her concerning her Christianity (c. 13). He then ordered that, if she would not sacrifice, she would be sentenced to capital punishment; the sentence was duly carried out (c. 14). She was martyred on 29 August; Christians buried her body alongside that of Serapia, in the town of Vindena (c. 15).

The magnificent church of S. Sabina, on the Aventine, was begun in the early fifth century by Pope Celestine I (422–32) and completed by his successor, Pope Sixtus III (432–40),² and has survived, almost intact, as it was originally conceived: it is the best-preserved early church building in Rome.³ Like other Roman churches of the period (known incompletely from excavation), it has a nave of three aisles which are separated by superb fluted columns of Proconnesian marble, and a semicircular apse. Excavation has shown that the present church was built over (and incorporated elements of) an earlier *domus ecclesiae* of pre-Constantinian times. S. Sabina originated as a *titulus*-church: at the Roman synod of 499 it was represented by two priests *tituli Sabinae*;⁴ a further priest of the same church signs himself *tituli sanctae Sabinae*.⁵ From these signatures it may be deduced that Sabina was a wealthy Roman matron who in the early fifth century (or earlier) made available property on the Aventine for the construction of a church,⁶ and that by the

² *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 100; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 235; trans. Davis, p. 38: 'In his time the bishop Peter built in Rome the basilica of St Sabina.'

³ It has naturally been the subject of many detailed studies, of which the most important are the following: J. J. Berthier, *L'église de Sainte-Sabine à Rome* (Rome, 1910); *DACL* XV/1, cols. 218–38 [M.-D. Darsy]; M.-D. Darsy, *Recherches archéologiques à Sainte-Sabine sur l'Aventin* (Vatican City, 1968); Krautheimer, *CBCR* IV, pp. 69–94; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 167–76; S. Episcopo, 'S. Sabina, basilica, titulus', *LTUR* IV, pp. 221–3; and Brandenburg, *Le prime chiese di Roma*, pp. 184–95.

⁴ *MGH*, AA XII, pp. 412, 414.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 411.

⁶ See Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 96–100; Lanzoni, 'I titoli presbiteriali di Roma antica', pp. 213–14 and 251–2; and M. Jost, 'Die Patrozinien der Kirchen Roms während des ersten Jahrhunderts. Entstehung, Bedingungen und Zusammensetzung', *Hagiographica* 8 (2001), 1–34, at 16–17.

end of the same century she was already being referred to as St Sabina, a designation which was confirmed a century later at the synod of 595, which was attended by *Placitus presbyter tituli sanctae Savinae*.⁷ By a progression which is common in the case of *titulus*-churches, a benefactor known only by name is subsequently designated as a saint, and comes ultimately to be regarded as a martyr. At that point, a *passio* describing the martyrdom was required. The present *passio* was arguably composed in Umbria, and then transmitted to Rome, in order to satisfy the need for information about the saint commemorated on the Aventine, at some point during the seventh century.

Although it circulated widely in manuscript from the ninth century onwards (see below), the *passio* which describes the martyrdom of St Sabina and her Christian companion (BHL 7586 + 7407) can hardly have satisfied the curiosity of the congregation of S. Sabina, for it describes the martyrdom of the two saints as taking place far away in Umbria, in the obscure village of *Vindena*, possibly to be located on the outskirts of the Roman town of *Interamna Nahars* (modern Terni).⁸ How an Umbrian martyr was pressed into service as the patron saint of a famous Roman church is utterly unclear.⁹ Various explanations have been proposed, for example by Kirsch, who suggested that the 'town of Vindena' (*oppidum Vendinensium*), as mentioned in the *passio* (c. 1), was simply a local Roman expression for the Aventine itself.¹⁰ It is also striking that the date of Sabina's martyrdom given in the *passio* (c. 15)—29 August—is precisely the date on which she is commemorated at Rome in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, St Sabina' (Appendix III, p. 656), where this date very probably refers to the day on which the basilica on the Aventine was dedicated.¹¹ In any event, these various details point to

⁷ MGH, *Epistulae* I, p. 367.

⁸ *Vindena* is attested, if unidentifiable, in Roman sources. In his *Historia naturalis* Pliny refers to an Umbrian tribe named the *Vindinates* (III. 14 [§114]), and an inscription from the vicinity of Terni refers to *Vindena* as an *oppidum* under the control of the *Interamnates*; see Berthier. *L'église de Sainte-Sabine*, pp. 502–12, esp. 503–4.

⁹ There was also a cult of St Sabina in Umbria: according to the *Liber pontificalis* a church dedicated to St Sabina was in existence near Terni from the end of the eighth century, during the pontificate of Hadrian I: 'he [Pope Hadrian] freshly repaired St Sabina's church in the territory of Ferentinellum' (LP, ed. Duchesne, I, p. 512; Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*, p. 169 with n. 186, who asks concerning *Ferentinellum*, 'Is this Ferentillo, 13 km ENE of Terni?').

¹⁰ Kirsch, *Die römische Titelkirchen*, pp. 163–6. Lanzoni found Kirsch's suggestion an attractive one ('I titoli presbiteriali di Roma antica', p. 252: 'le ragioni di Mons. Kirsch sono serie e fanno pensare'). And a philologist could easily understand *oppidum Vendinensium* as a corruption of *oppidum Aventinensium*. But the suggestion brings a train of problems: can the *Arcus Bini* (c. 3) and *Arcus Faustini* (c. 11) mentioned in the *passio* be located on the Aventine? And the two magistracies in question—the governor (*praeses*) of *Tuscia et Umbria* and the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy—would be irrelevant in a Roman context.

¹¹ So it is understood by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 304.

some kind of link between Umbria and the Aventine,¹² but remain, frankly, indecipherable.¹³

Text. The two components of the *passio* of SS. Serapia and Sabina—*BHL* 7586 (= cc. 1–11) and 7407 (= cc. 12–15)—each enjoyed a modest circulation. For *BHL* 7586, *BHLms* lists some twenty-eight manuscripts (of which two date from the ninth century, and three from the tenth), and for *BHL* 7407, sixty-two (of which two date from the ninth century, and two from the tenth). These numbers could be increased by a conscientious search of manuscript catalogues.¹⁴ The text which is translated here is that of the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Augusti VI* [1743], pp. 500–4; the chapter numbering is that of the Bollandists.

1. And so when the terrifying business of persecution was being experienced by the Christians, many people all over the world underwent martyrdom for the name of Christ.¹⁵ The holy virgin Serapia, a native of Antioch, was staying¹⁶ in the house of Sabina in the town of Vindena.¹⁷ Sabina was the wife of Valentine¹⁸ and the daughter of Herod Metallarius,¹⁹ under Vespasian²⁰ the

¹² See Verrando, 'Reciproche influenze', pp. 101–4. Verrando suggests that the local Umbrian cult of a saint named Sabina was influenced by the more famous Roman saint: 'Già al suo sorgere [sc. the cult of the Umbrian saint] ha subito l'influsso dell'omonima celebre santa-titolare romana, della quale ha adottato la festa anniversaria' (p. 103).

¹³ Cf. the comment of Agostino Amore: 'sono notate... alcune indicazioni topografiche... che farebbero pensare ad una località diversa di Roma, ma esse sono talmente oscure, ignote ed indecifrabili che non se ne può trarre alcun profitto' (*BSS* XI, col. 541).

¹⁴ Lanéry notes, almost in passing, two further ninth-century manuscripts ('Hagiographie', p. 306).

¹⁵ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, pp. 12–13.

¹⁶ The implication, though it is not spelled out, is that Serapia was a slave-girl owned by Sabina.

¹⁷ Vindena (*oppidum Vendinensium*) seems to have been a tiny village in Umbria, near the city of Terni; see de Rossi, 'Degli antichi monumenti cristiani dell'Umbria in generale', *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana* 2nd ser. 1 (1871), 82–93, esp. 90–3; and cf. *idem*, *Roma sotterranea* II, p. xxx, and Dufourcq, *Gesta*, III, p. 165. The site has sometimes been identified with that of Rocca di San Zenone on the north-eastern outskirts of Terni (see e.g. Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, p. 130, n. 2); but the identification is uncertain.

¹⁸ The name suggests that of St Valentine, who, according to the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, was martyred at Terni: 'At Terni, at the sixty-fourth mile of the Via Flaminia, the death of St Valentine' (Appendix III, p. 651). A local Roman martyr named Valentine, who was buried and venerated in a basilica at the first mile of the Via Flaminia, figures significantly in the *passio* of SS. Marius and Martha (XXII.15).

¹⁹ It is not clear whether *Metallarius* is Herod's *cognomen*, or whether it is simply the common noun *metallarius* ('mine-worker'). Given that mines (*metalla*) were worked by slaves, and that Sabina is of the highest Roman nobility (*illustrissima*: see c. 2), the likelihood is that *Metallarius* is intended here as Herod's *cognomen*. Crescenti (*La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, p. 130, n. 4) suggested that *metallarius* meant that Herod was 'un benestante' ('a well-to-do person'), but there is no support for such a meaning in *TLL* VIII, col. 869 ('*metallarius* i.q. homo metallo obnoxius').

²⁰ Vespasian was emperor from AD 69 to 79.

Augustus he [Herod] three times sponsored games for the Romans.²¹ Since, therefore, his daughter [Sabina] was a Christian, the aforementioned Serapia was staying with her, urging on her knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. St Sabina, believing in Christ, grew in faith and upright behaviour. Berillus, the governor (*praeses*),²² sent (soldiers) to bring the holy virgin of God [Serapia] to his tribunal. But the high-born (*illustrissima*) woman, Sabina, opposed this by deploying her slave-boys and slave-girls. And after a short while St Serapia said to her: 'Mistress and mother, allow me to go; you, however, pray, and trust in the Lord, Jesus Christ. For I believe, even though I am an unworthy sinner, that my Lord, Jesus Christ, will make me a worthy servant to His saints.' Sabina says to her: 'O virgin Serapia, my daughter and my mistress, I must either live with you or die with you; I will not release you.'

2. And since they [the soldiers] were threatening them sufficiently, she [Sabina] ordered a sedan chair to be got ready, and she set off for the governor's official residence (*praetorium*). And when it was announced to the governor that the illustrious (*illustrissima*) woman, Sabina, was standing outside the residence, and that she had with her that Christian woman Serapia, the governor got up and went to the door of the residence; greeting her respectfully, he said: 'Why do you demean yourself with this (woman)? Or why do you present yourself with this lowly person? And why do you not consider who you are, and whose daughter you are? For you have associated yourself with Christians, and have forgotten your noble birth, and the memory of the great man [Valentine] whose wife you were, and of the gods, whose anger I fear you will now incur. Go back to your house, and dismiss that unspeakable creature, who with her sorcery has taken you and several others away from the worship of the gods.' Sabina replied: 'I wish *you* could be persuaded by the "sorcery" of this saintly young woman, just as I have been justly persuaded by her to draw back from the idols and to recognize the true and indubitable God, Who calls good people to the eternal life, and abandons the wicked to everlasting punishment.' Then the governor, somewhat in awe of her, went back into the residence. She [Sabina], with the holy virgin of God [Serapia], went back to her home.

3. Three days later the governor mounted a spectacle across the bridge at the *Arcus Bini*, where stage shows²³ used to be held, and he gave orders to his

²¹ Reading *qui* (referring to Herod) rather than *quae* (which would refer to Sabina). What Herod sponsored on three occasions is described by this author as *candida <munera>*, that is, 'brilliant spectacles' paid for by candidates for high office. The adjective *candida* implies the complement *munera*, 'spectacles', 'games': see Sassi, *Il linguaggio gladiatorio*, p. 42.

²² Berillus is being envisaged as the governor of Umbria (*Tuscia et Umbria*). According to the *Notitia dignitatum*, the post of governor of *Tuscia et Umbria* was held by a consular, not a *praeses* (see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1454), which was a lower rank than consular.

²³ Latin *themela*, probably borrowed from Greek *θυμέλη*, 'the stage'. The location of the *Arcus Bini* is unknown.

attendants that Serapia should be brought there.²⁴ When an official had taken her off, St Sabina followed her on foot, and came to the spectacle; and when she saw that she could not help her, she shouted out to the governor: 'You rabid Asiatic dog! Do not afflict this holy virgin of God with tortures, against the interests of your own salvation—she who is your mistress! For the time is nigh—indeed our Lord Christ is at hand, Who will torture with eternal punishments you and your emperors, who have contemplated such punishments for those serving the living God.' And with a great moan she withdraws to her own home.

4. But the governor ordered St Serapia to be brought before him, saying to her: 'Sacrifice to the immortal gods, to whom our emperors sacrifice.' Serapia said: 'I fear and worship Almighty God, "Who made heaven and earth, and everything in them";²⁵ the gods, whom you order me to worship, I do not worship. They are not gods, but demons, and therefore it is not permissible for me to worship them, because I am a Christian.' The governor said: 'Come up, therefore, and sacrifice to your Christ.' Serapia replied: 'Every day I offer sacrifices to Him, worshipping and beseeching Him by day and night.' The governor said: 'And where is the temple of your Christ? Or what sacrifice do you offer to Him?' Serapia replied: 'That I show myself to be pure, through chaste behaviour, and that I bring others to that declaration through His mercy.' The governor said: 'Is this the temple of God and the sacrifice to your Christ?' Serapia said: 'There is nothing greater than knowing the true God, and living devoutly, and serving Him.' The governor said: 'Are you yourself, therefore, the temple of your God, as you say?' Serapia said: 'If through His support I shall remain pure, I am His temple, for thus says the holy scripture: "You are the temple of the living God and the spirit of God dwells within you".'²⁶ The governor said: 'If, therefore, you were violated, you cease to be the temple of your God.' Serapia replied: 'Holy scripture says, "If anyone should violate the temple of God, God will destroy him".'²⁷

5. The governor, being ignorant of sin, ordered her to be handed over to two lascivious youths from Egypt,²⁸ so that they could make use of her for an entire night.²⁹ Taking her, the disgusting youths led her to a secret location,

²⁴ The nature of the governor's spectacle (*ludus*) is not specified, but it was probably a wild animal show, as is clear from a passage in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, xxi. 5: 'Quid ludus, vel delicia eius referam? Habebat ursos ferociae seu magnitudini sui simillimos' (ed. J. L. Creed (Oxford, 1984), p. 34). Since the execution of criminals frequently figured in wild animal shows, the assumption may be that the governor was intending to expose Serapia to the beasts, once she had been condemned; but at this point she has not as yet been tried or condemned.

²⁵ Cf. Acts 4: 24.

²⁶ I Cor. 3: 16.

²⁷ I Cor. 3: 17.

²⁸ It is worth asking whether the author realized that Serapis, after whom Serapia is named, was in origin an Egyptian goddess.

²⁹ The motif of the condemnation of a virgin to sexual exploitation, typically in a brothel, is found in several *passiones*: those of Chrysanthus and Daria (X.23), Agnes and Emerentiana

where there was a very dark room. Then St Serapia prayed in this aforesaid room, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord Jesus Christ, Who are my true keeper and preserver: I invoke you, Lord Jesus Christ, Who visited and comforted the holy apostles when they were detained in a prison cell with locked doors. Be present now, I pray, and have mercy on me, Your foreign servant Serapia, and liberate me from the foul intentions of these youths. Let their eyes be darkened, so they cannot touch me, Your servant, (who am) trusting in You; and let them not contaminate Your sign [i.e. my virginity], sealed with consecration in Your (name). Confound their impudence, and purify me from the defilement of the flesh, and make me travel to You, and be present, Lord Jesus Christ, with Your servant Sabina. Strengthen her in Your magnificence, Lord Jesus Christ, so that the wicked devil shall not rejoice over her, who has suffered many (insults) for Your holy name in respect of me, your servant. Lord Jesus Christ, hear me, You Who are the blessed and glorious Son beyond praise, together with the Father and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.' And when around the first hour of night the aforementioned youths began to threaten the virgin's resolve, suddenly there was a mighty sound and a terrifying earthquake that was felt throughout the entire town. The youths, shaken, fell blind and breathless to the ground, lifeless in all their limbs; but the holy and immaculate virgin of God, seeing that heavenly assistance had arrived, spent the night praying to the Lord, with her pure hands stretched out towards heaven.

6. At first light agents were sent by the wicked governor, so that they could summon the youths and these evil ones could be interrogated as to whether they had fulfilled the (governor's) orders. As they went in, they found the holy virgin of God praying, but the youths spread out on the ground, as if dead, being unable to get up. But they couldn't speak, either; their eyes were open merely in a bodily sense (but they could see nothing). No small commotion ensued. When the governor heard all this, he ordered a tribunal to be set up, and for the holy servant of God to be brought in. And when she had been brought in, the governor said: 'What is it, girl? Did those youths fulfil your desires? And have you enjoyed it thus far?' St Serapia replied: 'Indeed you speak in jest, in accordance with your deranged mind, which the wicked devil perverts and possesses. I did not feel the youths whom you mention, nor were they with me.' The governor said: 'What then? They were not with you last night?' Serapia replied: 'He was with me, the one to Whom I belong.' The governor said: 'Who is that?' Serapia replied: 'My keeper and preserver, the Lord Jesus Christ.' The governor said: 'Why do you make such a mass of difficulties? Tell me, how or by means of what sorcery did you disable the

(XVII.8), and Rufina and Secunda (XXXI.5). For discussion of the legal background to the motif, see Crescenti, *La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, pp. 25–56, with discussion (and translation) of the present *passio* at pp. 125–42.

youths?’ Serapia replied: ‘It is not permitted for us Christians to be sorcerers; as for those whom you have destroyed through your evil practices: let our Lord, Jesus Christ, if called upon, restore them to life.’

7. The governor said: ‘If, therefore, your Christ is superior to every kind of sorcery, invoke Him on behalf of those youths, that their previous health may be restored to them, and they may say whether or not they had sexual congress with you during the night. For I know of a certainty that you made them insane with some magic tricks, so that they could not disclose any foul behaviour on your part.’ Serapia said: ‘God, Whose servant I am, is Almighty; in His hands nothing is impossible.’ The governor said: ‘If, therefore, nothing is impossible in the hands of that God, bring it about that those youths come to themselves and speak.’ Serapia replied: ‘I am ignorant of the sorcery which you suspect (in me), but prayer for me is to my God; through this (prayer) He attends not only to me, but to all those invoking Him with a pure heart.’ The governor said: ‘However you wish, only see to it that the youths may speak: and then we shall see your purity.’ Serapia replied: ‘I have already told you that I do not know how to practise sorcery, but only to pray and petition God, that He may approve.’ The governor said: ‘Go, then, to the place where the youths are; and pray to your God on their behalf.’ Serapia replied: ‘What is the point of my going there—so that others will not be cheated of a miracle, or will think badly of it, just as you do? Order that they be brought here in full view of all these people.’ And the governor ordered the youths to be brought; carrying them in their hands, they brought them to the tribunal. And they were as if they had never had speech, nor feet to walk on, nor hands for touching things: for they were deprived of (the use of) all members.

8. And so, with everybody watching, the governor said: ‘Serapia, pray now to your Christ in respect of their well-being.’ And St Serapia, raising her hands to the skies, said: ‘Lord God Almighty, “Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things which are in them”:³⁰ Who through Your holy apostles have raised up the dead, cleansed lepers, put demons to flight, granted speech to the mute and hearing to the deaf, now, I pray, hear me, Your servant trusting in You, and do not remain hidden because of this wretched non-believer: but raise up through my prayer these youths, in the sight of all these people watching You, in order to confound this fool, who raves against those believing in You. Hasten, O Lord, so that they may recognize that You are the only God Who performs miracles, and that there is no other God but You.’ And, drawing close, she touched those youths, saying: ‘In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, get up on your feet!’ As soon as they heard this, they jumped up and stood on their feet, and began to talk.

³⁰ Acts 4: 24.

9. And when the people had seen this, and were astonished, the governor said: 'Do you see, that she could not have performed this act of sorcery, unless she had stroked them with her hands?' And the governor said to the youths: 'By what means did this woman make you mindless and legless?' The youths said: 'Lord governor, when we went up to her in accordance with the orders of your sublime (lordship), a certain attractive young man of extremely great height came in, and he was shining like the sun, and he stood between us and this young woman; and because of his brilliance, trembling and blindness and incapacity seized us; and from that time until now we lost consciousness. Recognize, Lord governor, that this girl is either a witch, or else her God is truly mighty.' The governor said to the girl: 'Tell me, Serapia, what kind of sorcery it is that you practise; and I will release you at once.' Serapia replied: 'I hate sorcery; and all those who are Christians, in confessing Christ, reduce magic spells to naught, and they are unable to harm us.'

10. The governor said: 'Now I shall see if your magic has any force. And, if you will not sacrifice, I will have you beheaded.' Serapia replied: 'Do as you wish: I do not sacrifice to demons, nor obey the will of your father Satan, because I am a Christian.' And the governor ordered that two burning torches be applied to her; and when the torches were applied, they immediately went out, and those who were holding the torches fell backwards. And St Serapia, raising her eyes to heaven, said: 'Lord Jesus Christ, all my enemies are embarrassed and exceedingly disturbed: let them swiftly be turned back and thoroughly confounded.' The governor said: 'Sacrifice to the gods, lest you die.' Serapia replied: 'I do not sacrifice to your demons, so that I will not die your death.' The governor said: 'You suicidal³¹ witch! Listen to the imperial command and sacrifice to the immortal gods, and free yourself from torture and death.' Serapia replied: 'You are a suicide and sorcerer, who deny the true and living God; and, by worshipping demons, you are to die together with them. I offer myself as sacrifice to the immortal God, if He deign to receive me—although a sinner, nevertheless a Christian.'

11. And the governor ordered her to be beaten with staves. And while she was being beaten, suddenly there was a mighty earthquake; and a splinter from one of the staves, with which the holy virgin of God was being beaten, lodged in the right eye of the governor; three days later he lost the eye. Then, filled with rage, the governor passed the death sentence on the holy girl of God, saying: 'I have ordered that Serapia, not only because she scorns imperial commands, but also because she is possessed by such great sorcery, be struck down with the sword.' And the head of Serapia, the holy virgin of Christ, was struck off, next to the burial ground of Vindicianus, the Commander

³¹ Latin *biothanata* (correctly *biaiothanata*), from Greek *βαιοθάνατα*, 'a suicide', 'one who dies a violent death'. See *TLL* II, col. 1953 and Souter, s.v. 'biaeothanatus' both of which note that the word is attested in Tertullian, *De anima*, c. 57.

(*dux ducum*),³² across from the Arch of Faustinus.³³ St Serapia suffered martyrdom on 29 July, in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

12. Sabina, the high-born woman of illustrious rank, recovered the remains of the holy and untouched virgin of Christ Serapia, and, having embalmed the body with spices as usual and having celebrated the venerable funeral rites, buried her as an eternal treasure or precious pearl in the tomb which she had constructed with great care and attention. And from that day onwards she did not cease from giving alms, trusting in the name of Jesus Christ, and persevering in the faith which the holy virgin Serapia had entrusted her with. For she strove every day to visit the sick and those confined in prison, providing them with all necessities in abundance.

13. Therefore, when the prefect Helpidius,³⁴ an extremely rabid dog, arrived, the governor, blind in his soul and in his corporeal vision, reported to him everything which had taken place involving the religious woman Sabina. When he had shown her to him, they went into the (governor's) residence; on seeing her, the prefect interrogated her, saying: 'Are you Sabina, formerly the wife of Valentine, of illustrious reputation, and the daughter of Herod? Sabina replied: 'I am.' The prefect said: 'Why have you forgotten yourself and associated yourself with Christians, whose life is death? And why don't you worship the gods instead, whom our lords the emperors and Augusti worship?' Sabina replied: 'I give thanks to Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liberated me, a sinner, from the filth and power of demons through the agency of His servant Serapia, so that I should no longer go astray, as I see you are doing by

³² The phrase *dux ducum* is not a formal title, but a sort of poetic superlative; it is used, for example, of the miraculous column which led the Israelites to the Promised Land, by Alcimus Avitus, *Carm.* v. 420 ('protinus hanc patres sancti sensere sequendam / esse ducemque ducum'). For the use of *dux* in a non-technical sense, see Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects & Kings*, pp. 38–40.

³³ The location of the burial ground (*area*) of the commander Vindicianus, with the Arch of Faustinus (*Arcus Faustini*), has not been identified. E. Rossi-Passavanti, *Interamna dei Naarti* (Orvieto, 1932), pp. 252–3, drew attention to the remains of a massive arcade two miles outside Terni on the so-called *via sancta*; and Verrando ('Reciproche influenze', p. 104, n. 23) suggested that some recollection of the *arcus Faustini* may be preserved in the name of the hills of S. Faustino, or in that of the village of Faustino, near Massa Martana.

³⁴ Insofar as the 'prefect' Helpidius is the superior of the provincial governor of Etruria (*Tuscia et Umbria*), it would seem that he is being envisaged by our author as the praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy. (It is also the case, however, that from the early third century onwards, the urban prefect was given jurisdiction over an area extending 100 miles from Rome; Terni was some 64 miles from Rome, and would technically have fallen under the jurisdiction of the urban prefect.) Presumably it was necessary to introduce someone of his exalted rank (*illustris*) to try someone of Sabina's rank: as *illustrissima* she far outranks the governor, who like other provincial *praesides* is merely *clarissimus* (see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 378–9). No praetorian prefect named Helpidius is attested for the period of Vespasian's principate: see *PIR*¹ II, p. 129; but a number of high-ranking persons named Helpidius, including provincial governors, are recorded in fourth-century sources: see *PLRE* I, pp. 413–16.

worshipping demons.’ The prefect said: ‘Are you saying that not only I but our lords and emperors worship demons and not gods?’ Sabina replied: ‘I wish that you would worship God, Who made all things, through Whose will all things are ruled and visible and invisible things are governed, and would not worship these stupid and insensate idols of demons, because you and your emperors are going to burn together with them in the fires of Hell.’

14. The prefect said: ‘I swear by all the gods, that if you do not sacrifice, I will not delay in having you undergo capital punishment, but will immediately have you deprived of life.’ Sabina replied: ‘I shall not sacrifice to your demons, you insane devil, because I am a Christian, and I have Christ as my God, and am His servant and worshipper, and it is permissible for me to sacrifice to Him alone.’ Then the prefect, that agent of the devil, pronounced sentence on her, saying: ‘I decree that Sabina, (who is) disobeying the gods and is blaspheming our lords the emperors,³⁵ be struck down with the sword, and all her property be assigned to public ownership.’³⁶

15. When the head of Sabina, the saintly and venerable servant of Christ, had been struck off, the Christians took her body with great delight and buried it in her tomb in the village of Vindena, near the Arch of Faustinus, where she herself had buried her instructor in the faith, the virgin of Christ, Serapia. St Sabina suffered martyrdom on 29 August, and she was crowned together with Serapia, the steadfast virgin of Christ, Who grants power and eternal rewards to all those believing in Him, to Whom (be) honour and glory, together with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

³⁵ Crescenti (*La condanna allo stupro delle vergini cristiane*, p. 36) argued that the wording here—that Sabina was ‘blaspheming our lords the emperors’—implied that she was tried and executed on the charge of *maiestas*.

³⁶ The prefect’s sentence refers to the law by which the property of condemned criminals (*bona damnatorum*) was confiscated by the imperial treasury (*res privata*); see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 131–2.

XXXV

SS. Felix and Adauctus

c.600 × c.625; relevant to the hypogean basilica of SS. Felix and Adauctus, cemetery of Commodilla (Via delle Sette Chiese)

The brief *passio* of SS. Felix and Adauctus describes two well-attested martyrs of the ‘Great Persecution’ of Diocletian and Maximian, who were buried in a hypogean basilica near the Via Ostiense.¹ The *passio*, though very short, is valuable for topographical detail of seventh-century Rome, and especially for mention of the hypogean basilica in which SS. Felix and Adauctus were buried in the cemetery of Commodilla.

The narrative is quickly told. In the days of Diocletian and Maximian, there were two Christian priests, two brothers who were both named Felix; the elder brother was summoned for trial by the urban prefect, but when asked to sacrifice before statues of various pagan gods, he blew on them and they collapsed (c. 1). The prefect ordered that Felix be decapitated, and he was taken to a pagan site on the Via Ostiense; as they were proceeding to the place of execution, an unnamed Christian shouted out his adherence to Christian belief, and he, too, was executed in the same place, where subsequently a basilica was constructed (c. 2).

The shrine of SS. Felix and Adauctus was a hypogean basilica situated in the cemetery of Commodilla, located on the Via delle Sette Chiese, just off the Via Ostiense.² The cemetery dates from the fourth century; the shrine of the

¹ Listed *BHL* 2880; cf. *CPL* 2190 (which cites as source for the *passio* the redaction made in the ninth century by Ado of Vienne: see below). For discussion of the *passio*, see Delehaye, ‘Les saints du cimetière de Commodille’, pp. 19–29; Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 244–5; P. Franchi de’Cavalieri, ‘Dei SS. Felice ed Adauto’, in his *Note agiografiche* IV, *Studi e testi* 24 (Rome, 1912), pp. 41–53; *BSS* V, cols. 582–5 [A. Amore]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 209–11. All these authors base their discussion on the ninth-century redaction by Ado [*BHL* 2778], rather than on the seventh-century original edited by Surius and listed as *BHL* 2880 (see below). This *passio* is not discussed by Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’.

² On the cemetery of Commodilla, see the detailed description by Bellarmino Bagatti, *Il cimitero di Commodilla*, esp. pp. 7–14 (SS. Felix and Adauctus), 37–58 (Gallery B and the burial of the martyrs), and 101–3 (the later development of the hypogean basilica); see also Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 108–26; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 197–9; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 139–43; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 218–21;

two martyrs is located in what is described by archaeologists as Gallery B. The shrine was enlarged by Pope Damasus so as to constitute a hypogean basilica; his involvement in the enlargement is clear from one of his epigrams, a fragment of which was found in situ in the eighteenth century:

O, once and again 'blessed' in your true name [Felix]
 who, having scorned the emperor of the world with inviolate faith
 confessed Christ (and) sought the celestial realms!
 O, the truly precious faith of his brother—recognize this!—
 by which Adauctus likewise hastened to heaven as victor!
 At the command of Bishop Damasus, Verus the priest
 constructed for them this tomb, adorning the shrine of the saints.³

The basilica was constructed with a large staircase to facilitate access to the martyrs' tombs; and whereas such tombs usually receive sombre decoration, the hypogean basilica housing the remains of SS. Felix and Adauctus is lavishly decorated with frescoes, including a large-scale depiction of the *traditio clavium* ('handing over of the Keys'), showing the two martyrs in the company of Christ, SS. Peter and Paul, and St Stephen;⁴ and another, equally large-scale, known as the 'Madonna of Turtura', showing the Madonna holding the Christ-Child in her arms, and Felix and Adauctus on either side of her, and a woman named as Turtura, who possibly commissioned the fresco.⁵

The feast-day of SS. Felix and Adauctus is not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I), but the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* contains the following entry against 30 August: 'Rome, on the Via Ostiense, <in the cemetery> of Commodilla, Felix and Adauctus' (Appendix III, below, p. 656). The hypogean basilica is mentioned in the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries. In the *Notitia ecclesiarum*, in the entry for the Via Ostiense, the pilgrim is told that, as s/he proceeds to the west [i.e. from the previously-mentioned Via Ardeatina], 'you will find St Felix, bishop and martyr, and you descend by

C. Carletti, 'Commodillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 134–40, with figs. 133–42; and *idem*, 'Storia e topografia della catacomba di Commodilla', in *Die Katakombe 'Commodilla'. Repertorium der Malereien*, ed. J. G. Deckers, G. Mietke and A. Weiland, 3 vols. (Vatican City, 1994), I, pp. 3–27, esp. 10–17 (Gallery B and the tombs of SS. Felix and Adauctus).

³ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 98–100 [no. 7]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 94–6; trans. Appendix II (b), p. 639. A fragment of the original tablet, in elegant Filocalian lettering and preserving parts of the wording of lines 3–6, was found in the crypt in the eighteenth century and subsequently identified by de Rossi (*Roma sotterranea*, I, p. 119); for illustration, see Carletti in *LTUR. Suburbium* II, fig. 137. The full text of the epigram is preserved in several medieval *syllogae*: the Fourth Lorsch *sylloge* (*ICUR* II, p. 102 [no. 32]), and those of Einsiedeln (*ibid.* p. 32 [no. 76]), Saint-Riquier (*ibid.* p. 82 [no. 20]), and Tours (*ibid.* p. 67 [no. 29]).

⁴ See Deckers, Mietke and Weiland, *Die Katakombe 'Commodilla'*, I, pp. 50–7, and II, colour pl. 3.

⁵ See Deckers, Mietke and Weiland, *Die Katakombe 'Commodilla'*, I, pp. 61–5, and II, b/w pls. 6 and 8, and colour pls. 2 (the basilica), 8 (the Madonna of Turtura), 9 (Madonna), 11 (Adauctus), 12 (Felix) and 13 (Turtura).

stairs to his body' (Appendix IV (a) [§10], p. 661);⁶ and *De locis sanctis martyrum* has the following entry: 'And not far from there is the church of St Felix, where he lies in peace, (and) with him, Adauctus, who hastened to martyrdom when (Felix) passed on to heaven, and they both lie in the one place' (Appendix IV (b) [§4], p. 662). The detail about Adauctus in this last entry suggests that, by the time this itinerary was composed (635–45), the description of the martyrdom contained in the present *passio* was already in circulation. This suggests that the *passio* is to be dated to the first quarter of the seventh century.

Text. The text of the *passio* translated here (BHL 2880) is that edited by Lorenz Sauer (1522–78), whose name is Latinized as *Laurentius Surius*, a Carthusian monk of St Barbara in Cologne,⁷ in his widely popular compendium of saints' Lives, *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, published at Cologne in the late sixteenth century.⁸ The text of the *passio* enjoyed relatively wide circulation: BHLms lists forty-one witnesses (of which only one is earlier than the eleventh century). Without full collation of these witnesses, however, it is not possible to assess the accuracy of Sauer's edition: he is notorious for personal intervention in the texts he edited, often rewriting them extensively according to his own sense of style.⁹ Whether such rewriting is to be found in the present *passio* of SS. Felix and Adauctus, remains to be determined. Another factor bearing on the circulation of the legend of these two martyrs is that in his *Martyrologium*, composed c. 840, Ado, archbishop of Vienne (d. 875),¹⁰ excerpted the present *passio* (BHL 2880) nearly verbatim, so as to

⁶ It is odd that no mention is made here of St Adauctus, and that Felix is described erroneously as a 'bishop'.

⁷ On Lorenz Sauer (1522–78) and the *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, see DACL XV/2 [1953], cols. 1736–7 [H. Leclercq]; P. Holt, 'Die Sammlung von Heiligenleben des Laurentius Surius', *Neues Archiv* 44 (1922), 341–64; S. Spanò Martinelli, 'Cultura antica, polemica anti-protestante, erudizione sacra nel *De probatis sanctorum historiis* di Lorenzo Surio', in *Raccolte di Vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo*, ed. S. Boesch Gajano (Fasano di Brindisi, 1990), pp. 131–41; and esp. R. Godding, 'L'oeuvre hagiographique d'Héribert Rosweyde', in *De Rosweyde aux 'Acta Sanctorum'. La recherche hagiographique des Bollandistes à travers quatre siècles*, ed. R. Godding, B. Joassart, X. Lequeux and F. De Vriendt, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 88 (Brussels 2009), pp. 35–62, at 36.

⁸ L. Surius, *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, 6 vols. (Cologne, 1570–5), IV [1579], pp. 1012–13.

⁹ Cf. the comment by Robert Godding: 'Surius n'avait pas hésité à réécrire des textes entiers dans un meilleur style, ou à retrancher des passages qu'il jugeait ridicules ou peu édifiants' ('L'oeuvre hagiographique d'Héribert Rosweyde', p. 36).

¹⁰ Ado's *Martyrologium* is available most conveniently in PL CXXIII, cols. 201–346 (which is a reprint of the earlier edition of Heribert Rosweyde (1613)); there is a more recent edition by J. Dubois and G. Renaud, *Le martyrologe d'Adon. Ses deux familles, ses trois révisions. Texte et commentaire* (Paris, 1984). The work was first issued between 853 and 860; a second recension was issued, with a new preface, by Ado himself c.865 (a third recension probably dates from after Ado's death). For analysis of Ado's *Martyrologium*, see H. Quentin, *Les martyrologes hisoriques du moyen âge. Étude sur la formation du martyrologe romain* (Paris, 1908), pp. 464–675, and

constitute his entry for 30 August.¹¹ Ado's chapter, which is listed separately by the Bollandists as *BHL* 2878, also enjoyed fairly wide circulation: *BHLms* lists twenty-six manuscripts, of which one dates from the ninth century, and one from the tenth; it was also included by Mombricitus in his *Sanctuarium* (I, p. 551), and was quoted *in extenso* by the Bollandists themselves, *Acta SS. Augusti* VI [1743], pp. 546–7, nn. 5–6. The chapter-numbering is my own.

1. When the fury¹² of Diocletian and Maximian was slaughtering God's saints with various tortures, they ordered two brothers, who in name and deed were 'Felix', priests of the Holy Catholic Church, to be sent to Dracus, the urban prefect,¹³ because of their (alleged) impiety, saying that if they refused to sacrifice, they would be punished. Meanwhile, one of those (priests named) Felix, who was elder brother, was taken on the orders of the prefect to the temple of Serapis,¹⁴ next to the offices (*secretarium*) of the prefecture; when he was compelled to sacrifice, he blew on the face of the bronze statue, and immediately it collapsed. Likewise he was taken to another shrine, where a statue of Mercury was set up, so that he could burn incense there; he blew on it in the same way, and it collapsed. Likewise he was taken to a third shrine, to a statue of Diana, and, blowing on it, it collapsed. He was then taken back to the prefect; he was placed on the rack and asked with what enchantments he had done this. He said in reply: 'I did this not with the enchantments of the devil but with the bounties of my Almighty God.' And so the prefect, filled with rage, ordered him to be taken out past the city wall on the Via Ostiense, to a place at the second mile. And because there was a lofty tree at the site (of the pagan temple), he was compelled to sacrifice there; if he would not do this, it

(briefly), J. Dubois, *Les martyrologes du moyen âge latin* (Turnhout, 1978), pp. 42–3. It was Quentin who first demonstrated that Ado's chapter on SS. Felix and Adauctus (*BHL* 2878) was excerpted from the seventh-century *passio* (*BHL* 2880) translated here: see *Les martyrologes historiques*, pp. 519–20.

¹¹ *PL* CXXIII, cols. 342–4.

¹² Sauer here prints *feruor* ('heat', 'vehemence'), but some manuscripts reported by the Bollandists at *BHL* 2880 read *furor* ('anger', 'fury'), which is what is translated here.

¹³ No urban prefect named Dracus is attested for the period of the tetrarchy of Diocletian: see *PLRE* I, pp. 1052–4.

¹⁴ The temple of Serapis (*Serapeum*) was an imposing structure built by Caracalla on the western slope of the Quirinal (between the present-day Piazza della Pilotta and Piazza del Quirinale); see Platner–Ashby, p. 487; Richardson, p. 361; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 234 and 238 with fig. 59 (no. 2); and R. Santangeli Valenzani, 'Serapis, aedes, templum', *LTUR* IV, pp. 302–3. The *secretarium* in which the prefect held his tribunal, if it did indeed lie 'adjacent to the temple of Serapis' (*ad templum Serapis iuxta secretarium*), was distinct from the *secretarium* of the urban prefect adjacent to the temple of Tellus in which, in several other *passiones* of Roman martyrs, trials of Christians were conducted; cf. F. Coarelli, 'Praefectura urbana', *LTUR* IV, pp. 159–60, and above, nos. VII.1 (Pope Cornelius), XVI.8 (SS. Abdon and Sennes), XVI.11 (Pope Sixtus II), XXVII.12 (Pope Stephen), XXIX.11 (SS. Eusebius and Pontianus), and XXXIII.3 (SS. Calogerus and Parthenius). The *secretarium* 'adjacent to the temple of Serapis' does not appear to be mentioned in any other ancient source; see G. De Spirito, 'Serapis, templum (in fonti agiografiche)', *LTUR* IV, p. 303.

would be reported to Dracus. And when St Felix was taken to the aforesaid place, so that he could be befouled with wicked sacrifices, he blew on the tree, and said: 'I command you in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ to collapse, roots and all, and to completely shatter the temple and its altar, so that souls may not be deceived any longer by your cult.' Immediately at the word of the saint it fell down so that it destroyed both the temple and the altar with its idol, so that nothing whatsoever was left of them.

2. When this was had been reported to Dracus, the urban prefect, by an officer, he immediately ordered him [Felix] to be taken out on the same road and to be decapitated in the same place, and his body to be left unburied for the wolves and dogs. When he was being taken there, a certain man, a Christian, joined him—a man unknown to men but well known to God. When he learned that the blessed Felix had been ordered to undergo capital punishment, he began to shout out and to say in a loud voice, 'I too am of the same covenant; and Him Whom this holy priest is confessing, I worship as the Lord Jesus Christ, and I shall be subject to the same penalty. For I have chosen to die now with him, and to triumph with the Lord Jesus Christ in eternity, rather than to live longer with your wicked emperors, and to be tortured with everlasting punishments in eternity.' Meanwhile they were taken to the place where the aforementioned tree had stood; and when a brief respite had been allowed them for praying, they rose up from their prayers, gave each other the kiss of peace, and underwent capital punishment together. Their bodies were left unburied, but Christians, coming at night to the place where the tree had stood, buried them there, because its destruction had left a gaping hole in the ground. The next day the pagans, wishing in their excessive anger to dig up their bodies, were seized by the devil—at least all those who dared to lay a hand on them. Later, in peaceful times, a basilica was constructed there, in which divine miracles take place up to the present day.¹⁵ Both martyrs—Felix the priest and Adauctus—achieved their martyrdom on 30 August, our Lord, Jesus Christ, reigning without end.

¹⁵ On the hypogean basilica of SS. Felix and Adauctus, in the cemetery of Commodilla, see above, p. 593 with n. 2.

XXXVI

SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix

c.600 × c.700; relevant to the basilica and cemetery of Generosa *ad Sextum Philippi* (Via Portuense)

This brief *passio* concerns a Christian woman named Beatrix who, after her two brothers (Simplicius and Faustinus) had been executed at the time of the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian, was betrayed to the authorities by a wicked neighbour who wished to seize the estate which she had inherited from her brothers, and was strangled in prison; the wicked neighbour subsequently underwent a cruel death.¹

The three brief chapters may be summarized as follows. During the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian, Simplicius, and Faustinus were tortured and then executed by being thrown into the Tiber; but Beatrix, their sister, with the help of other Christians, retrieved their bodies and buried them in a cemetery *ad Sextum Philippi* (c. 1). Beatrix inherited the estate, which was coveted by a neighbour, who betrayed her to the authorities; she was remanded in custody, and then strangled in prison, after which she was buried by Lucina alongside her brothers *ad Sextum Philippi* (c. 2). The wicked neighbour, Lucretius, seized the saints' estate, and then held a feast to celebrate the acquisition; but an infant, who was being breastfed at the time, denounced Lucretius in public, whereupon Lucretius was seized by a demon and died; Lucina fled the persecution, but Beatrix appeared to her in a vision, and told her that the persecution was to end that very same month (c. 3).

The *passio* gives the date of deposition of Simplicius and Faustinus as 29 July, in *Sextum Philippi* (c. 1); by chance, Beatrix herself is subsequently buried in the same cemetery on the very same date (c. 2). The martyrdoms of SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix are not recorded in the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I), but the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry against 29 July: 'Rome, on the Via Portuense *ad Sextum Philippi*, Simplicius, Faustinus, Beatrix, Rufus' (Appendix III, p. 655). (Note

¹ Listed *BHL* 7790 (it is not listed in *CPL*); see discussion by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 243–4; *BSS* XI, cols. 1204–5 [A. Amore]; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 240–1. It is not discussed by Lanéry, 'Hagiographie'.

that this Rufus does not figure in the present *passio*.) In one of the seventh-century pilgrim itineraries, *De locis sanctis martyrum*, the entry for the Via Portuense notes that 'SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix all lie in peace' (Appendix IV (b) [§3], p. 662; note that no mention is made here of Rufus).

The cemetery referred to as lying *ad Sextum Philippi* in the *passio* is that known to archaeologists as Generosa, apparently named from an otherwise unknown benefactor. The cemetery, with its above-ground basilica, was discovered by G. B. de Rossi in 1868 at the sixth mile of the Via Portuense;² further excavations were carried out by Enrico Josi in 1936,³ and then by Philippe Pergola in the early 1980s.⁴ The various campaigns of excavation have succeeded in bringing to light a substantial basilica of three naves, with an apse having a *fenestella* which allowed worshippers to view the martyrs' crypt; and from the fact that de Rossi found *in situ* a fragmentary inscription⁵ in Filocalian lettering, showing the legend '[FAV]STINO VIATRICI', indicates clearly that the basilica was originally built by Pope Damasus (366–84), in veneration of our three martyrs.⁶ The basilica was damaged during the sixth-century Gothic invasions, but then repaired by Pope Vigilius (537–55) and enhanced with a fresco picturing the martyrs.⁷ In the following century, Pope Leo II (682–3) built an intra-urban oratory for the three martyrs in the vicinity of the church of S. Bibiana;⁸ but no trace of this church remains.⁹

The *passio* is at best a piece of uninspired hackwork. The author took as his starting point the entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* for 29 July, and then embellished it by refiguring the three saints as brothers and sister and locating their martyrdom in the 'Great Persecution' of Diocletian and Maximian. In order to account for the death of Beatrix, he invented a rapacious

² See de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, III, pp. 647–97 ('Il cimitero di Generosa super Philippi al quinto miglio della via Portuense presso il bosco degli Arvali'); Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 87–93; and Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 154–8.

³ E. Josi, 'Cimitero di Generosa. Sterro della basilica cimiteriale dedicata ai martiri Simplicio, Faustino Viatrice sulla via Portuense', *RACr* 16 (1939), 323–30.

⁴ P. Pergola, 'Appendice: La fouille de la basilique de Generosa', appended to his article 'Nereus et Achilleus martyres', in *Saecularia Damasiana*, pp. 218–24, with figs. 7–11.

⁵ Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 97–8 [no. 6]; Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 90–1; trans. Appendix II (a), p. 639. Unlike many of Damasus' inscriptions, this one is not metrical, and was possibly inscribed on the architrave at the entrance to the basilica.

⁶ Cf. the comment by Pergola ('Nereus et Achilleus martyres...'), 'Appendice: La fouille de la basilique de Generosa', p. 224: 'Le grand sondage entrepris dans la partie méridionale du sanctuaire du pape Damase... nous permet donc d'attribuer à celui-ci, de façon indubitable, la paternité d'un grand édifice à trois nefs...'

⁷ See Nestori, *Repertorio topografico*, p. 147 [no. 2], and esp. M. Minasi, 'L'affresco di Cristo tra santi della catacomba di Generosa alla Magliana: revisione critica e nuove ipotesi interpretative', *RACr* 81 (2005), 53–98, at 53–87.

⁸ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 201; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 360; trans. Davis, p. 81: 'He built a church in Rome close to St Bibiana's, where he deposited the bodies of Saints Simplicius, Faustinus, Beatrice.'

⁹ See Coates-Stephens, 'Dark Age Architecture in Rome', p. 187.

landowner named Lucretius, but did not bother to think through how this landowner, who seems simply to have been an informer (*delator*), could have had the judicial authority to conduct a trial and to lock Beatrix in prison. When she has been strangled in prison, her body is recovered by Lucina, a character lifted from numerous earlier *passiones*. It is impossible to date a wretched piece of work such as this; but perhaps it belongs to the seventh century, to the period after the restoration of the basilica by Pope Vigilius.

Text. In spite of its manifest deficiencies, the *passio* of SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix proved surprisingly popular, and circulated widely in manuscript: the Bollandists' *BHLms* lists ninety-four witnesses, of which two date from the ninth century, and seven from the tenth. The text of *BHL* 7790 was first printed by Mombricitus (II, pp. 531–2); it was subsequently edited by the Bollandists, using Mombricitus' text and two other witnesses, in *Acta SS., Iulii* III [1723], pp. 36–7. The present translation is based on the Bollandists' edition, and follows their chapter numbering.

1. In the days of Diocletian and Maximian, most wicked of emperors, many Christians were killed in the city of Rome for the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ.¹⁰ At that same time it happened that <there lived in Rome>¹¹ a certain Beatrix, 'blessed' in name and deed,¹² who was the sister of SS. Simplicius and Faustinus, who, <after having suffered>¹³ for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ many and various tortures, which were inflicted on them by executioners, were sentenced to undergo capital punishment; and their bodies, with stones tied around their necks, were cast into the waters of the Tiber at the bridge called 'the Stone Bridge' (*pons lapideus*);¹⁴ through the will of God

¹⁰ Adherence to 'the name of Christ' (*nomen Christianum*) was one of the most frequent charges on which Christians were tried and executed: see Introduction, pp. 12–13.

¹¹ The text as printed by both Mombricitus and the Bollandists is deficient, no verb being supplied to complement *contigit ut*; I understand the omitted words to have been *commoraretur Romae*, or something similar.

¹² The etymological explanation of the name *Beatrix*—'blessed in name and deed'—indicates that, for the author of this *passio*, the saint's name was indeed *Beatrix* rather than *Viatrix*, the form attested in a Damascan inscription (see Appendix II (a)) and preferred by many commentators; see, for example, Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 240: 'Il nome della terza martire era certamente *Viatrix* e non *Beatrix*, come è confermato dell'iscrizione damasiana.' The text of the present *passio* makes it clear that the martyr's name was Beatrix, and that the form *Viatrix* in the Damascan inscription reproduces the Vulgar Latin pronunciation of the engraver, with *b* pronounced as [v], and *e* as [i]; see Grandgent, *Vulgar Latin*, pp. 133–5 [§315], and 83 [§197] respectively, esp. p. 83: 'I is very often used for *e* in inscriptions and late writings'; see also Stotz, *Handbuch* III, pp. 15–20 (*i* für *e*) and 255–8 (*v* für *b*). The prevalence of these very spellings in Christian inscriptions is noted by D. Mazzoleni, 'Inscriptions in Roman Catacombs', in Flocchi Nicholai et al., *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, pp. 147–85, at 167–8.

¹³ Supplying a verb, such as *passi sunt*, omitted from the transmitted text.

¹⁴ The name *pons lapideus* occurs in medieval sources from the seventh century onwards as a designation for the *Pons Aemilius*, the oldest stone bridge in Rome, dating from the 2nd century BC and known today as the Ponte Rotto, since no more remains of it than a single arch;

their bodies were found next to the place which is called Sextus Philippi, on the Via Portuense.¹⁵ Then the blessed Beatrix, together with the holy priests Crispus and John and other Christians too, raised up the bodies of SS. Simplicius and Faustinus from the river and buried them there in Sextus Philippi, on 29 July. And this woman Beatrix, their sister, who, as we said, was 'blessed' indeed, after she had seen to the burial of her brothers, the martyrs of Christ, went to the blessed Lucina and stayed with her for seven months. During this entire period two little crows came to visit them, each one bringing a nut.

2. It happened that a certain estate, which was in the common ownership of the blessed Beatrix and her brothers, was coveted by the neighbouring land-owner.¹⁶ He had the blessed Beatrix arrested and taken to sacrifice to the idols. Then the blessed Beatrix said to them: 'I do not sacrifice to idols, because I am a Christian.' Whence Lucretius said to her: 'Draw near now, and sacrifice to the great goddess Diana, and save yourself from the various tortures which are awaiting you.' And so the blessed Beatrix shouted out to him in a loud voice: 'May things never go well for you, Lucretius! I have already said to you that I am a Christian, and am the servant of my Lord, Jesus Christ; and I never sacrifice to your false idols.' Having heard this, Lucretius ordered her to be remanded in custody in prison, until she could take stock of herself. And when she resisted, this ambitious neighbour, Lucretius, had her strangled by his servants; and thus she gave up her spirit to the Lord. The holy and venerable Lucina¹⁷ buried her with her sainted brothers in Sextus Philippi on 29 July.

see Platner-Ashby, pp. 307–8; Richardson, pp. 296–7; F. Coarelli, 'Pons Aemilius', *LTUR* IV, pp. 106–7; and G. De Spirito, 'Pons Lapidus', *LTUR* IV, p. 110.

¹⁵ The cemetery in question is that known by the name of *Generosa*, at the fifth—or, more correctly, sixth—mile of the Via Portuense, in the area known as *La Magliana* (discovered in 1868). See de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, III, pp. 647–97 ('Il cimitero di Generosa super Philippi al quinto miglio della via Portuense presso il bosco degli Arvali'); Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 87–93; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 191–2; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 230–2; R. Martorelli and E. M. Loreti, 'Sextum Philippi (ad), coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, V, pp. 72–81; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 239–41, esp. 239 n. 87. Needless (perhaps) to say, the fifth or sixth mile of the Via Portuense is in no sense on the river Tiber. The author was presumably working from the notice in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, which in its original form arguably read 'Romae, via Portuensi, ad sextum Philippi, Simplicii, Faustini, et Viatricis' (see above), and had no reliable knowledge of how this location related to the river.

¹⁶ The author omits to explain what magistracy this covetous neighbour held: for if he was able to initiate and conduct a *cognitio*, he was no ordinary landowner, but must have been either the urban prefect or his deputy (*vicarius*), or at least, in respect of legislation passed by Constantine in 331, a 'count' (*comes*) of the imperial *consistorium* (see Peachin, *Iudex vice Caesaris*, pp. 191–4).

¹⁷ A devout matron named Lucina recovers and buries the bodies of executed martyrs in several Roman *passiones*, notably that of St Sebastian (III.88–9); probably owing to the influence of the *passio* of St Sebastian, she fulfils the same function in later *passiones*, including those of Pope Cornelius (VII.3), Processus and Martinianus (XIX.8), and Pope Marcellus (XX.21–2); see Verrando, 'Note sulle tradizioni agiografiche', pp. 353–73, and Cooper, 'The Martyr, the *Matrona* and the Bishop', pp. 311–16. It may be worth noting as well that in the *passio* of

3. Thereafter Lucretius occupied the saints' estate, and hosted a feast; and while they were feasting, he reviled the saints of God. And there was a woman there who was breastfeeding her son. That infant, wrapped up in blankets, shouted out in the presence of everyone at the feast: 'Listen, Lucretius: you have killed (them) and occupied (their estate). Behold, you are given over to the possession of the devil.' At these words, Lucretius went pale, and fear and trembling overcame him. And Satan immediately took possession of him; he harassed him there at the feast for three hours, until he carried off his spirit. Such great terror overcame all those who were present that they beat a hasty retreat to the Christians; and, having become Christians themselves, related to everyone the martyrdom of the holy and blessed martyr Beatrix, the virgin of Christ, and how she was vindicated at the feast. Although the venerable woman Lucina had fled in fear of the ferocity of martyrdom, Beatrix, God's saint, appeared to her, saying: 'Do not go away, because this very month, peace will be granted to the churches of Christ.' Which is what happened, with our Lord, Jesus Christ, assisting and reigning, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

St Sebastian, a woman named Beatrix stands alongside Lucina as a sponsor in baptism for various women (III.36).

XXXVII

St Symphorosa and Her Seven Sons

c.600 × c.700 (?); relevant to the basilica of St Symphorosa *ad Septem Fratres* (Via Tiburtina, ninth mile)

This brief *passio* concerns a Christian widow from Tivoli who was martyred, together with her seven sons, under the emperor Hadrian.¹ The narrative is as follows.

When the emperor Hadrian consulted the gods in the process of dedicating his palace at Tivoli, he was told that if the Christian widow Symphorosa was to sacrifice to the gods, they would be propitious to him (c. 1). When summoned before Hadrian, Symphorosa reminded him that he had already executed her husband, Getulius, and her brother-in-law, Amantius, for their Christian beliefs (c. 2). Hadrian gave her an ultimatum: either sacrifice, or die a wretched death (c. 3). Symphorosa was taken to the temple of Hercules, where she refused to sacrifice, and was accordingly drowned in the river there (c. 4). The seven sons of Symphorosa were brought before Hadrian; they too were taken to the temple of Hercules and, on refusing to sacrifice, were killed in various ways (c. 5). Thereafter, first Hadrian's daughter, and then Hadrian himself, was seized by a demon; he was advised by magicians to remain underground, but when, after a year, he emerged into the light of day, he was struck down dead (c. 6). The bodies of Symphorosa and her seven sons were buried in fitting tombs at the eighth [*recte* ninth] mile of the Via Tiburtina (c. 7).

It will be clear from the synopsis that the *passio* of St Symphorosa and her seven sons is modelled on the earlier *passio* of Felicitas and her seven sons (I). As we have seen, the author of that *passio*, finding (perhaps in the *Depositio martyrum*) an entry involving the names of seven persons martyred on the same day (10 July), and having in mind the martyrdom of the seven sons of the

¹ Listed BHL 7971 and CPL 2238; see discussion by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 197–8; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, pp. 134–6; BSS XI, cols. 1217–29 [B. Cignitti]; Consolino, 'Modelli di santità femminile', pp. 88–9; D. de Carlo, 'S. Sinforosa martire tiburtina tra agiografia e leggenda', *Atti e Memorie della Società Tiburtina di storia e d'arte* 62 (1985), 105–39; F. Sciarretta, *S. Sinforosa e i primi martiri tiburtini. Per una storia della religiosità tiburtina* (Tivoli, 2002); Saxer, 'Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie', pp. 28–30; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 233–8; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 104–6.

unnamed Maccabean woman described in the second book of Maccabees, combined the seven martyrs of 10 July with a female martyr named Felicitas, in order to create the story of the martyred widow Felicitas and her seven martyred sons. Inspired by this model, the author of the present *passio* attempted to do likewise: finding an entry in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 27 June concerning seven brothers martyred at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina (Appendix III, p. 654), he combined these seven brothers with a female martyr named Symphorosa, who, like Felicitas before her, was portrayed as a widowed mother martyred with her seven sons (albeit not on the same day). The combined martyrdom is commemorated on 18 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, Symphorosa the mother, with seven brothers; she was buried with them' (Appendix III, p. 654).

In 1878, Enrico Stevenson excavated a site at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, at a place known as *ad Septem Fratres* (modern Settefratte in the Comune di Tivoli), and discovered the remains of a basilica of considerable size (40m × 20m) with a tripartite nave, dating from the fourth or fifth century, which had clearly been constructed as a martyrial shrine: the basilica was built over a crypt with two tombs (in Stevenson's interpretation, one tomb for St Symphorosa, the other for her seven sons); the basilica contained a sort of *fenestella confessionis*, a construction designed to enable pious visitors to view the tombs of martyrs below.² This martyrial site was known in late antiquity, because it is described in the pilgrim itinerary *De locis sanctis martyrum* as lying at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina and containing the tombs of seven martyrs—Julian, Primitivus, <S>tacteus, Nemesius, Eugenius, Justinus, and Crescens (Appendix IV (b) [§9], p. 664)—the very same names given in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* and the present *passio*, though in a different order. With this information to hand, the author of the *passio* fabricated his story of the widow Symphorosa and her seven sons. Cécile Lanéry argued that, since St Symphorosa is mentioned by Arnobius the Younger in his *Liber ad Gregoriam*, the *passio* must date from the early fifth century;³ but, unlike the *Passio S. Felicitatis* (no. I), which is mentioned in the same passage of the *Liber ad Gregoriam*, and which can be securely dated to the early fifth century on the basis of verbal debts in other (approximately datable) *passiones*, such as that of St Sebastian (no. III), there is no corroborating evidence to place the *passio* of Symphorosa in the fifth century; furthermore, it seems to me very likely that the author of the *passio* took the names of the seven brothers from either the

² E. Stevenson, *Scoperta della basilica di S. Sinforosa e dei suoi sette figli al nono miglio della Via Tiburtina* (Rome, 1878), esp. pp. 7–30; for a full account of excavations of the site carried out during the 1970s, see Stapleford, *The Excavation of the Early Christian Martyrs Complex*, with discussion by Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Riflessi topografici', pp. 204, 220 and figs. 16–19, and A. M. Nieddu, 'Tivoli: Santa Sinforosa e figli', in *Santuari d'Italia: Lazio*, ed. Boesch Gajano et al., pp. 261–2.

³ 'Hagiographie', p. 238.

Martyrologium Hieronymianum (late sixth century?) or from *De locis sanctis martyrum* (635–645), which in either case would point to a date of composition in the seventh century.

Text. The *passio* of St Symphorosa and her seven sons enjoyed very modest circulation: *BHLms* lists twenty-seven witnesses, to which Cécile Lanéry was able to add a further six.⁴ The present translation is based on the text of Mombricitus (II, pp. 552–3), collated with that in *Acta SS., Iulii IV* [1725], pp. 358–9, with the ‘prologue’ (i.e. the first two sentences of c. 1) at p. 355, n. 22.

1. St Eusebius the historiographer records that Africanus wrote the *gesta* of nearly all the martyrs of the royal City [Rome] and all Italy.⁵ He stated that Symphorosa was executed, together with her seven sons, on one day during the principate of Hadrian, at Tivoli, in the following manner.⁶ When Hadrian had completed his palace⁷ and wished to dedicate it in accordance with that wicked pagan custom, and began to solicit responses from his sacrifices to idols—indeed from the demons which inhabit the idols—they replied and said: ‘The widow Symphorosa, with her seven sons, butchers us daily by invoking her God. If this woman, with her sons, was to sacrifice, we promise that we would provide everything which is sought from us.’ Then the emperor Hadrian ordered her to be arrested, together with her sons, and urged them with gentle words to agree to sacrifice to the idols.

2. The blessed Symphorosa said to him: ‘When my husband, Getulius, and his brother, Amantius, were your tribunes,⁸ they suffered (martyrdom) through

⁴ ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 235–6, n. 507.

⁵ Africanus is discussed several times in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Eusebius: i. 6. 2 (on Herod), i. 7. 1–4 (referring to a letter by Africanus to Aristides on the harmony of the genealogies given in the gospels), and vi. 31. 2 (that Africanus composed five books of *Chronographies*). The present reference is presumably to this last; but note that the surviving fragments of the *Chronographies* (CPG 1690; ed. PG X, cols. 63–94) contain no reference whatsoever to martyrs of Rome. On Julius Sextus Africanus, see (briefly), *EEC* I, p. 460 [M. Simonetti], and Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 307.

⁶ These first two sentences (‘St Eusebius...following manner’), which serve as a sort of prologue, are preserved in the edition of Mombricitus. However, Thierry Ruinart, in his celebrated edition of martyr acts (*Acta primorum martyrum sincera* (Paris, 1689) [reprinted many times], pp. 18–20) omitted the first two sentences, because he regarded the reference to Africanus as spurious; the Bollandists, following Ruinart, likewise omitted the two sentences in their edition, but printed them from various witnesses in a footnote (*Acta SS., Iulii IV* [1725], p. 355, n. 22). See discussion by Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 236–7.

⁷ The previous reference to Tivoli (which is located some nineteen miles from Rome on the Via Tiburtina) indicates that the ‘palace’ in question is Hadrian’s vast and lavish villa at Tivoli; see the concise account of this major monument by Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 481–8, as well as the more extensive treatments by W. L. MacDonald and J. A. Pinto, *Hadrian’s Villa and its Legacy* (New Haven, CT, 1995), and *Villa Adriana. Paesaggio antico e ambiente moderno. Elementi di novità e ricerche in corso* (Milan, 2002).

⁸ The *passio* of St Getulius, the composition of which was prompted in part by the present work, states that Amantius was a tribune of Hadrian (XXXIX.3), but not Getulius, whom the author of that *passio* represents as a learned Christian teacher.

various tortures for the name of Christ, because they would not agree to sacrifice to idols; and like great athletes they overcame your demons by their deaths: they preferred to be decapitated rather than to be conquered. For that death which is undergone for the name of Christ does indeed earn dishonour among mortal men; but as they advance among the angels handing them rewards for their sufferings, they merit eternal life in heaven with the eternal King.'

3. The emperor Hadrian said to Symphorosa: 'Either you and your sons sacrifice (willingly) to the omnipotent gods, or I will force you and your sons to sacrifice.' And she (said): 'Your gods cannot accept me as a sacrifice; but if I should be inflamed for the name of Christ my God, I will burn your demons instead.' The emperor Hadrian said: 'Choose one of two things: either sacrifice to my gods, or you will die a wretched death.'

4. Symphorosa replied: 'Do you think that you can change my mind by means of some terrible threat?—when I simply desire to rest in peace with my husband, Getulius, whom you killed for the name of Christ?' Then Hadrian the emperor ordered her to be taken to the temple of Hercules,⁹ and first to be beaten there with fists, and then to be hanged by her hair. But since he could not recall her by argument or terrible threat, he ordered her to be cast into the river with a huge stone tied to her.¹⁰ Her brother Eugenius, a leading man in the *curia* of Tivoli, recovered her body and buried it in the suburbs of that city.

5. On another day the emperor Hadrian ordered all her seven sons to be brought before him; when he had challenged them to sacrifice to the idols, and saw that in no way at all would they submit to his menaces and threats, he ordered seven posts to be fixed (in the ground) around the temple of Hercules; and he ordered them to be stretched out on racks with pulleys, and for the throat of Crescens to be cut, first of all; second, for Julian to be stabbed in the chest; third, for Nemesius to be stabbed in the heart; fourth, for Primitivus to be wounded in the stomach; fifth, for Justinus to be turned over and stabbed with swords in the back; sixth, for Stacteus to be wounded with a sword (plunged) in his side; and seventh, for Eugenius to be cut open from top to bottom.

⁹ There was a temple of Hercules at the third mile of the Via Tiburtina, near to where the Via Tiburtina crosses the river Anio (at the ancient Ponte Mammolo), known from at least the third century BC (according to Livy, *Ab urbe condita* xxvi. 10. 3, Hannibal pitched camp there in 211 BC while on his way to Rome); see Z. Mari, 'Herculis templum (Via Tiburtina)', *LTUR. Suburbium III*, pp. 54–5. However, the largest and best-known temple of Hercules was that of Hercules Victor, built in the second century BC and at the time one of the largest structures in central Italy, located just to the west of Tivoli, some eighteen miles from Rome; see Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 489–92, with fig. 144 [reconstruction of the temple]. It is not clear which of these two temples of Hercules the author of the *passio* has in mind.

¹⁰ The river in question is presumably the Anio, which flows by the site of the temple of Hercules near to where the Via Tiburtina crosses the river at the Ponte Mammolo (see Z. Mari, 'Tiburtina via', *LTUR. Suburbium V*, pp. 160–75, at 166). But, higher up, the Anio also flows through Tivoli itself, at a place not far distant from the great temple of Hercules Victor. The body of Symphorosa could be visualized as having been cast into the river at either of these locations.

6. Coming the next day to the temple of Hercules, he ordered their bodies to be taken away together and to be cast into a deep pit; and the (pagan) pontiffs put them in the place which is called 'the Seven Deaths' (*ad Septem Biaiothanatos*).¹¹ A week later, on the eighth day of their martyrdom, the devil seized the daughter of the emperor Hadrian; and, coming to the place where the saints had been buried, the devil shouted out from her mouth, saying: 'My lords, you seven brothers, martyrs of Christ: you are burning poor me!' Fear overcame her father, the emperor Hadrian, such that his whole frame was afflicted; and when his magicians and sorcerers saw that he was shaken in this way, they forced him to remain underground in his palace, and to stay there, saying to him: 'If you should see the light of day or gaze on the splendour of the sun, you will die at once.' But when he had remained there for nearly a year, he went outside through a wish to see daylight; and immediately a demon seized him, and tormented him at such length that it carried off his spirit. There was great fear of Christ.¹²

7. Thereafter the persecution died down for a year and six months. During this space of time, the sainted bodies of all the martyrs were held in reverence, and when tombs had been built, were buried with every care: their names are written in the Book of Life.¹³ The feast day of these holy martyrs of Christ—the blessed Symphorosa, and her seven sons, Crescens, Julian, Nemesius, Primitivus, Justinus, Stacteus, and Eugenius—is celebrated on 18 July.¹⁴ Their bodies lie on the Via Tiburtina, at the eighth mile from the city, with our Lord, Jesus Christ reigning, to Whom is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹¹ The location of this burial pit, used for executed criminals, is unknown. The text of Mombricitus has the corrupt reading (*ad septem*) *brothanatos*; but it is obvious that the word in question is *biaiothanatos* ('victim of a violent death'), a loanword from Greek βιαιοθάνατος first attested in a Latin source in Tertullian, *De anima*, c. 57; see Souter, p. 30, and Blaise, p. 115.

¹² The passage concerning the divine vengeance visited on Hadrian ('A week later... great fear of Christ') was omitted by Ruinart, and hence by the Bollandists, but is preserved in the edition of Mombricitus, and evidently formed part of the original *passio*.

¹³ The 'Book of Life' (*liber vitae*) is referred to at Phil. 4: 3, and frequently in Apc.: 3: 5, 13: 8, 17: 8, 20: 12 etc.

¹⁴ This statement is problematical. It is clear from the narrative that Symphorosa was executed on a different day from her seven sons. The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following entry for 27 June: 'Rome, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, the death of the seven brothers Crescens, Julian, Nemesius, Primitivus, Justinus, Stacteus, Eugenius' (Appendix III, below, p. 654); elsewhere, against 18 July, the same text reads: 'Rome, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, Symphorosa the mother with seven brothers; she was buried with them' (*ibid.*). The so-called 'prologue', that is, the first two sentences of c. 1, states that Symphorosa 'was executed, together with her seven sons, on one day (*una die*)', whereas in c. 5 we are told that, following the death of the mother, the seven sons were executed 'on another day' (*alia die*). The apparent contradiction caused Cécile Lanéry to suggest that the 'prologue' was added by a later redactor, who was not the author of the original text ('Hagiographie', p. 237); but it seems to me more likely that the one and original author had in mind an entry such as that for 18 July in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*—the date which is specified for their commemoration in the present passage.

XXXVIII

St Pigmenius

c.600 × c.700 (?); relevant to the *titulus*-church of St Pudentiana, the basilica of St Bibiana (Esquiline), the cemetery *ad Clivum Cucumeris* (Via Salaria Vecchia), and the cemetery of Pontianus (Via Portuense)

The brief *passio* of St Pigmenius expands the treatment of several martyrs who had previously figured in the *passio* of SS. John and Paul (no. XVIII); although its focal point is Pigmenius and his relationship with his erstwhile pupil, the emperor Julian, the narrative also includes several martyrs whose relationship with Pigmenius is not made clear, and of whom the best known is probably St Bibiana.¹

The narrative is as follows. In the days of Constantine, a priest named Pigmenius was rector of the *titulus*-church of Pastor, where he trained Julian, the future emperor, in Christian doctrine (c. 1). Pigmenius took in Donatus, the future bishop of Arezzo, whom he trained alongside Julian; the two students were ordained to minor clerical office; but, on becoming emperor, Julian abandoned his Christianity and Pigmenius left for Persia (c. 2). An illustrious senator named Flavianus, a former urban prefect, together with his wife Dafrosa and their daughters Demetria and Bibiana, was a devout Christian; the fact that he was recovering and burying the bodies of Christians came to the notice of Julian, who summoned him to a hearing and relegated him to *Aquae Taurinae*, and entrusted Dafrosa to a certain Faustus, whom she managed to convert to Christianity and who, when summoned before Julian, died on the spot (c. 3). Dafrosa recovered the body of Faustus and buried it, following which she died; Julian summoned her two daughters, Demetria and Bibiana, of whom Demetria died from fear as soon as she entered into Julian's presence, whereas Bibiana was committed to a pagan woman named Rufina,

¹ Listed *BHL* 6849 and *CPL* 2218; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 123–6; Kirsch, 'Römische Martyrlegenden', pp. 56–7; M. E. Donckel, 'Studien über den Kultus der hl. Bibiana: Rückblick und Ausblick', *Römische Quartalschrift* 43 (1935), 23–33 [a survey of earlier scholarship on St Bibiana]; *idem*, 'Der Kultus der hl. Bibiana in Rom', *RACr* 14 (1937), 125–35; Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 124–43; *BSS* X, cols. 871–3 [G. D. Gordini], s.v. 'Pimenio', and III, cols. 177–81 [G. D. Gordini], s.v. 'Bibiana'; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 289; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 232–3.

in the hope that Rufina would bring her back to pagan belief; Bibiana refused to recant, and was accordingly beaten to death (c. 4). John the priest buried the body of Bibiana, and was accordingly arrested and decapitated without trial; meanwhile, Pigmenius, who had remained in Persia for four years and had gone blind there, was instructed in a vision to return to Rome, where he encountered Julian, who, after a chance meeting on the Via Salaria, ordered him to be thrown into the Tiber; his body was buried in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense (c. 5). Divine vengeance pursued Julian, who, while on campaign in Persia, was captured and skinned alive by the Persians, with his skin being dyed and used by them as a coverlet (c. 6).

The present *passio* is manifestly dependent on the earlier *passio* of SS. John and Paul (BHL 3242), translated as the Appendix to no. XVIII: Hippolyte Delehaye described the present work as 'a sort of appendix to that of SS. John and Paul'.² As in the earlier work, the martyrdoms were assigned to the years of the (supposed) persecution under Julian 'the Apostate'. From the earlier work the author took over the characters of Pigmenius and John the priest, as well as that of Flavianus, the former urban prefect. But he amplified the narrative by making Pigmenius the tutor of the young Julian,³ whom he trained in Christian doctrine and even ordained a subdeacon, so that, at a subsequent point in the narrative, when Julian orders Pigmenius to be thrown into the Tiber, the contrast between the pious tutor and the wicked apostate would be heightened: a contrast which is emphasized at tedious length in the final chapter of the *passio* (c. 6). The author also amplified the earlier account by introducing a Christian wife of Flavian, named Dafrosa, and two Christian daughters, named Demetria and Bibiana. Of all these (fictitious) characters, the only two who are known from martyrological sources are Pigmenius himself, whose death is commemorated against 2 December (*not* 20 April, as in the present *passio*) in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, and St Bibiana, to whom an important intra-urban church was dedicated.⁴ This church is first mentioned in the life of Pope Simplicius (468–83) in the *Liber pontificalis*, where we are told that he built 'in Rome close to the Licinian

² *Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 132 ('La légende de S. Piménus, prise dans son ensemble, est une sorte d'appendice à celle des SS. Jean et Paul').

³ We know from Ammianus Marcellinus that Julian was well taught in Greek letters and philosophy (to a lesser extent in Latin letters), because he spent much of his early life at school in Athens. The names of a number of his tutors are known (see *PLRE* I, p. 477), but these do not include Pigmenius, whose relationship to Julian is pure fiction.

⁴ On the basilica of St Bibiana, see Kirsch, 'Römische Martyrlegenden', pp. 56–7; Krautheimer, *CBCR* I, p. 94; Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, p. 215; G. De Spirito, 'S. Bibiana', *LTUR* I, pp. 194–5. The present Baroque church of S. Bibiana, on the Via Giolitti, near the Stazione Termini, is the work of Bernini (1624–6), and no certain trace of the late antique church has yet been identified; architectural historians suggest that the original building was a three-aisled structure, with its apse lying to the south.

palace another basilica, of St Bibiana the martyr, where her body rests'.⁵ It is clear that the author of the *passio* was familiar with at least this area of Rome, for—perhaps basing himself on the same sentence in the *Liber pontificalis*—he was able correctly to locate the burial place (and subsequent basilica) of St Bibiana in the vicinity of the Esquiline (*ad caput Tauri*), near to the *palatium Licinianum* (which presumably was located in the *horti Liciniani*) and the Aqua Claudia (c. 4). It is surprising that he omits to mention the date on which St Bibiana was buried, presumably because no such notice was to be found in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*. As it has been preserved, the *passio* of St Pigenius is probably a work of the seventh century.

Text. The *passio* of St Pigenius is, according to *BHL*ms, preserved in a single manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1193 (s. xii)); it is this manuscript which served as the basis for the only edition of the work, that by Hippolyte Delehaye, *Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 259–63. The present translation is based on Delehaye's edition, and preserves his chapter numbering.

1. At the time when Constantine, who had built Constantinople in his own name, was ruling the Roman Empire, there was in Rome a certain priest named Pigenius,⁶ in the *titulus*-church of Pastor,⁷ a man venerable for his virtuous behaviour and much admired by his fellow citizens for his learning in the liberal arts. The Roman populace was in the habit of visiting him; and while they were receiving from him instruction in the liberal arts, many of them were baptized in the salvation-bringing heavenly font, and, with the guidance of their master, entered into the sheepfold of Christ through his efforts. This man had trained Julian, the son of Constantius, the brother of

⁵ *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 112; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 249; trans. Davis, p. 42.

⁶ As stated above, the character of the priest Pigenius has been taken from the *passio* of SS. John and Paul (*BHL* 3242); there, the priests Pigenius and John were described as secretly recovering and burying the bodies of Christians executed during the persecution of Julian (XVIII, App. 4).

⁷ Various evidence suggests that the *titulus Pastoris* was another name for the *titulus Pudentis*, the church which subsequently became S. Pudenziana, and which figures in the *passio* of SS. Pudenziana and Praxedis, translated above (no. XV). The *titulus Pudentis* was represented by two priests named Asterius and Justinus at the Roman synod of 499 (*MGH*, AA XII, p. 411), and again, by a priest named Bassus, in the synod held under Pope Gregory the Great in 595 (*MGH*, *Epist.* I, p. 366); see Kirsch, *Die römischen Titelkirchen*, pp. 61–7, and C. Angelelli, 'Titulus Pudentis: nuove acquisizioni', in *Scavi e scoperte recenti*, ed. Brandenburg and Guidobaldi, pp. 63–76. The church may also have been known as the *titulus Pastoris*, as a result of a confusing statement in the *passio* of SS. Pudenziana and Praxedis (Pastor speaking): 'he [Pudens] established a *titulus*-church in my name (*titulum nomini nostro constituit*) in the city of Rome' (XV.1); see Vanmaele, *L'église Pudentielle*, pp. 43–4, as well as M. Cecchelli, 'Il sacello di S. Pietro e l'oratorio di S. Pastore in S. Pudenziana: una messa a punto', *Romanobarbarica* 9 (1987), 47–64, and *eadem*, 'S. Pastor, titulus', *LTUR* IV, p. 62. The reference in the present *passio* probably derives from that in the earlier *passio* of SS. Pudenziana and Praxedis (no. XV).

Constantine,⁸ and, once he was baptized, instructed him most eagerly in divine and human learning. This (Julian), cultivated by Pigmenius, the priest, because of his noble blood, began to associate himself with all the illustrious senators (*illustribus*) and to explain to them the things he had been taught by Pigmenius. And since he was loved by everyone, he said of himself that he had been born to the purple, and that he was loved by all the senators, since he seemed elegant and wise. As the people were admiring his energy, they began to spread the rumour that he could even rule the Roman state. Whereupon, having been sent to Nicomedia by the emperor, he was absent from Rome.⁹

2. This Pigmenius took in a certain lad named Donatus, of noble birth, who was rejected by his kinfolk because he was seeking the (Christian) meadows of salvation, and fully instructed him, alongside Julian, in all the disciplines of the liberal arts, and, when he had been baptized in the faith of the Holy Trinity, strengthened him with the teachings of the gospels and the apostolic bounty of the Holy Spirit, and when he had been made a cleric, promoted him in sacred orders together with this same Julian. For the blessed Donatus was made a lector, and Julian a subdeacon.¹⁰ After the passage of many years, through the hidden will of God—‘Whose judgements are incomprehensible and Whose ways are inscrutable’¹¹—Julian was advanced from the grade of subdeacon to imperial heights by (the will of) the people.¹² Wickedly altering his lifestyle and rank in an atrocious manner, and forgetful of the milk of wisdom on which he had been nourished, he began to persecute the salutary name of Christ, punishing with severe torture many thousands of Christians in various provinces. In fear of him many saints [i.e. Christians], abandoning their cities, were compelled to flee and to seek out various hiding-places. When, in his rage, forgetful of his former education and fellowship, he sought to afflict with various punishments Pigmenius, his master, and Donatus, his fellow student,

⁸ Julian was the son of Julius Constantius, the half-brother of Constantine the Great; see *PLRE* I, pp. 477–8. Constantius was Augustus from the death of Constantine in 337 until his own death in 361 (*PLRE* I, p. 226); he was succeeded as Augustus by Julian.

⁹ Julian was sent to Nicomedia in 344, and subsequently transferred to Cappadocia, where he remained for six years; in 351 he returned to Nicomedia; he was summoned to Italy in 354 and proclaimed Caesar in 355 (*PLRE* I, p. 477).

¹⁰ In the *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, which contains the fullest surviving account of the life of Julian ‘the Apostate’, there is no mention at any point of his having been a Christian cleric. The present statement is developed from words put into the mouth of Julian in the *passio* of SS. Gallicanus, John, and Paul: ‘I, too, obtained a (minor) clerical rank. And if I had wished to proceed to the highest ranks of the church hierarchy, I could have done so’ (XVIII.10). The author of the present *passio* has interpreted ‘(minor) clerical rank’ as meaning ‘subdeacon’, and teased out the implications of the earlier work, in order to emphasize the wickedness of Julian’s subsequent apostasy.

¹¹ Rom. 11: 33.

¹² Julian did not become Augustus by ‘the will of the people’, but on the nomination of Constantius, who on his deathbed named Julian as his heir: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* xxi. 15. 5.

Pigmenius went to Persia and Donatus went to *Aritium* (Arezzo) in Tuscany.¹³ As to how and for what reasons, let us faithfully concern ourselves to bring (these matters) to the notice of the faithful in what follows.

3. In these days there was a certain illustrious senator (*illustris*), formerly an urban prefect, named Flavian.¹⁴ This man had secretly been made a Christian, together with his entire household; his wife was named Dafrosa, and of his daughters, one was named Demetria and the other, Bibiana. They had been brought up in utter purity and faith. Since he [Flavian] went to recover the bodies of Christians by night, and to bury them, it was reported to Julian that Flavian was looking for the bodies of the saintly Priscus the priest and Priscillianus the cleric and Benedicta the religious matron; he was also making it known that SS. John and Paul had been killed in their own house one night.¹⁵ He began to announce publicly that the state was offending God through the persecution of Julian, who had previously been Christian and subsequently (became) an apostate and persecutor. Then Julian, condemning Flavian by edict, ordered him to be deported to the *Aquae Taurinae*, at the sixtieth mile from the City, on the Via Claudia.¹⁶ He ordered his wife, together with his two daughters, to be starved to death, if they would not sacrifice to the gods and accept husbands. She [Dafrosa] is handed over to a certain Faustus, a kinsman, but still a pagan, who was to pressure her with suchlike warnings.

¹³ On St Donatus of Arezzo, see BSS IV, cols. 773–82 [G. Lucchesi]. Donatus was martyred (together with Hilarianus) at Arezzo, under Julian. There is abundant hagiography concerning Donatus: note BHL 2289–94, and Lanéry, ‘Hagiographie’, pp. 307–8. Since the earliest *passio* of St Donatus (BHL 2289), a work datable to c.700, describes him as the student of Pigmenius, it is obviously dependent on the present *passio*, and provides a very rough *terminus ante quem* for the latter work.

¹⁴ This detail is taken from the *passio* of SS. John and Paul (BHL 3242), translated above as the Appendix to no. XVIII: ‘Flavian, an illustrious senator (*vir illustris*) and a former urban prefect’ (XVIII, App. 4). The only urban prefect named Flavian who is attested for the first half of the fourth century is Iunius Flavianus, who held the prefecture in 311–12; see PLRE I, pp. 344 and 1053.

¹⁵ This information, too, is taken from the *passio* of SS. John and Paul, where, however, the martyred Christians whose bodies are recovered by Flavian are named Crispus (not Priscus), Crispinianus (not Priscillianus) and Benedicta (XVIII, App. 4). The secret burial of the bodies of SS. John and Paul in their own house on the Caelian Hill is narrated in the same chapter.

¹⁶ The *Aquae Taurinae* mentioned here are to be identified as the *Aquae Tauri* (modern Bagni di Traiano, a spa town near Civitavecchia), located off the Via Claudia (correctly spelled Clodia), approximately forty-five miles from Rome; see Talbert, *Barrington Atlas*, Map 42 (B4), and M. Torelli, *Guide archeologiche Laterza: Etruria* (Bari and Rome, 1980), pp. 115–17. (The *Aquae Tauri* are in fact much nearer to the Via Aurelia than to the Via Clodia, but this author is not much concerned with topographical accuracy.) As Delehaye pointed out (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 142), the *Aquae Tauri* are mentioned by Pliny, *NH* iii. 5. 8, and in the early fifth century by Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo* i. 249: ‘nosse iuvat Tauri dictas de nomine thermas’; it is probable, as Delehaye suggested (*ibid.*), that the name of these ‘waters’ was chosen by the author of the *passio* as a place of exile for Flavian, even though he had no precise knowledge of its exact distance from Rome, because the church of S. Bibiana, and hence the martyrdom of St Bibiana, were located in Rome in the district of the Esquiline named *Caput Tauri*, at the *Forum Tauri* there, as explained below, c. 4: see nn. 18 and 22.

But through the providence of God it happened that not only did she persevere in firm faith, but even managed to gain Faustus for Christ in baptism through her salvation-bringing advice. When Julian heard this, he said to Faustus, when (he was) brought before him: 'I believe that you have now lost the nobility (and) the wife of the unfortunate Flavian by means of magical and dismissive arguments.' Faustus replied: 'I did not so much lose her advantages, but rather she acquired me for herself so that I might be worthy to see Him Whom you deny, Whose kingdom is everlasting.' And Julian (said): 'Indeed I was once a Christian, but in my attachment to the State I am now serving the gods and goddesses. But you, who are an illustrious (*illustis*) senator of the Roman people and have always served the gods, by whom my humble self was raised up: I do not know how you have been seduced.' Faustus replied: 'I was not seduced, but am subject to the angels, just as you are to the demons. But so that you might know, listen to what I say: Let my God and Lord, Jesus Christ, pray for me, Who is to judge the quick and the dead, and your kingdom (as well); and you pray to your demons, and we shall see whose prayer is heard.' Julian said: 'You are raving mad, Faustus.' And the holy man Faustus, on his knees in prayer, gave up his spirit to the Lord in the emperor's sight.

4. Then Julian ordered that his body be thrown outside and not buried, but be left for the dogs. But Dafrosa, coming that same night, recovered his body and buried it in her house, next to the house of SS. John and Paul.¹⁷ And, praying to the Lord, she gave up the ghost after five days. And Julian, hearing that she had passed away without being tortured, began to ponder (this), and ordered her two daughters to be presented to him. Brought into the presence of the emperor Julian, Demetria, as soon as she had gone in, was struck with fear and gave up the ghost. Witnessing this, Julian said in his confusion, 'Let a woman be found who can teach even this one [Bibiana] the lore of the gods.' Bibiana is given over to a certain Rufina, a pagan. After six months, Bibiana is urged by Rufina to burn incense to the idols and to take her son in matrimony. But the holy virgin Bibiana, persevering in the teachings of Christ, laughed at Rufina. And when she was frequently afflicted with beatings, the saint never ceased from preaching Christ. Rufina reported this to the emperor Julian. On that same day the emperor ordered her to be beaten with lead-weighted whips. When this had been done, on the fourth day after Julian's command, Bibiana gave up the ghost, with blood oozing from her mouth. Her body lay for two days in the *Forum Tauri*¹⁸ on the orders of the emperor Julian. John, the

¹⁷ The *domus* of Dafrosa (and Flavian) is imagined by the author to be located in the vicinity of the *domus* of SS. John and Paul, that is, on the Caelian, but its precise location—if it is not simply imaginary—cannot be determined; see G. De Spirito, 'Domus: Flavianus et Dafrosa', *LTUR* II, p. 101.

¹⁸ The *Forum Tauri* (also known, mistakenly, as the *Forum Taurorum*) was located in that part of the Esquiline known as the *Caput Tauri*, that is, the area in the Augustan *Regio V* lying between the church of S. Bibiana (see n. 22) and the *Porta Tiburtina* (the *Caput Tauri* is

priest,¹⁹ coming at night, recovered her body and buried it in a house next to her mother and sister, in a crypt in Rome in (the district known as) *Caput Tauri*, next to the Licinian Palace (*palatium Licinianum*)²⁰ at the *Aqua Claudia*,²¹ where John and Pigenius used frequently to meet.²²

5. On hearing this, Julian in his authority commanded Pigenius, saying: 'Go wherever you will, life will not be sold to you here. Tell me on what grounds or for what services rendered I (should) grant you your life.' For he [Pigenius] had cultivated Julian the emperor because of his noble blood, had made him a Christian and taught him letters, and, given that he was learned in grammar and rhetoric and geometry and arithmetic and philosophy and all Christian teaching, had instructed him accordingly; he had even made him a subdeacon in the holy catholic church. Then the emperor Julian, filled with rage, ordered John the priest to be detained; he ordered that he was to be decapitated without trial on the *Via Salaria* (Vecchia), next to the statue of

mentioned in the *Liber pontificalis* life of Pope Alexander: *LP*, ed. Mommsen, p. 10; ed. Duchesne, I, p. 127; trans. Davis, p. 4). The *Forum Tauri* was built between 364 and 366 by Flavius Taurus, praetorian prefect of suburbicarian Italy (355–61) and consul in 361. See G. De Spirito, 'Forum Tauri', *LTUR* II, pp. 347–8.

¹⁹ John, the priest, has been taken over from the *passio* of SS. John and Paul, in which he and Pigenius are said to have recovered the bodies of the martyrs Crispus, Crispinianus, and Benedicta (XVIII, App. 4).

²⁰ The transmitted text reads *iuxta palatium Luciani*, but Delehayé rightly conjectured that *Luciani* is an error for *Liciniani* (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, p. 262). Although no trace of it remains today, the *palatium Licinianum* (or: *Liciniani*) was presumably located in the *horti Liciniani*, the vast gardens in the Augustan *Regio V* (i.e. the Esquiline) belonging to the emperor Licinius Gallienus (253–68), which occupied the area north of the *Via Labicana*, inside the Aurelian Walls: see Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 199 and 200, and S. Rizzo, 'Horti Liciniani', *LTUR* III, pp. 64–6, with discussion of the *palatium Licinianum* at p. 65, and a valuable map at fig. 37a. We know from *SHA*, 'Gallienus', c. 17, that Gallienus preferred to reside in these gardens, and that he had moved there *omnia palatina officia*—including presumably his *palatium*. The *horti Liciniani*, and hence the *palatium*, were located along what today is the *Via Giolitti*, which runs parallel to the *Stazione Termini*, on which the basilica of S. Bibiana is also located: that is to say, as the author tells us, the *palatium Licinianum* lay in the close vicinity of the church of S. Bibiana. (More recently, it has been suggested that the *palatium Licinianum* was the work of Licinia Eudoxia, daughter of Theodosius II (408–50) and wife of Valentinian III (425–55), who chose part of the (immense) Sessorian palace as her residence: see G. De Spirito, 'Palatium Liciniani / Licinianum', *LTUR* IV, p. 45.) The *Aqua Claudia* entered Rome near the Sessorium (see following note) at the *Porta Maggiore*.

²¹ On the *Aqua Claudia*, the greatest of all Roman aqueducts, see Platner–Ashby, pp. 22–3; Richardson, pp. 16–17; Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome*, pp. 190–251; Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 448–9; and Z. Mari, 'Aqua Claudia', *LTUR* I, pp. 63–4. From the seventh mile, the *Aqua Claudia* ran along the top of spectacular arches, and entered Rome at the *Porta Maggiore*, where the *Via Labicana* also entered the city. It lay in the vicinity, therefore, of the site of the *horti Liciniani* and the presumed location of the *palatium Licinianum* (see previous note). In the Middle Ages the aqueduct was known as the *Forma Claudiana* (which suggests that the transmitted text, as printed by Delehayé—*ad formam Claudiam*—should be emended to read *ad formam Claudia<na>m*).

²² The basilica of S. Bibiana was located on the edge of the *horti Liciniani*, in the presumed vicinity of the *palatium Licinianum*: see the valuable map in *LTUR* III, fig. 37a.

the Sun on Cucumber Hill (*Clivus Cucumeris*).²³ His body was recovered by Concordius, the priest, and buried in a sarcophagus in a crypt in that same place, with hymns and prayers, in accordance with the wishes of the martyrs. Julian, the wicked emperor, was a persecutor of Christians. He stood out as a persecutor and profaner of his own empire. But Pigmenius the priest, having abandoned the *titulus*-church of Pastor, went to Persia, where he lived for four years and went blind. After four years he was addressed in a dream vision by the Lord Jesus Christ, saying: 'Pigmenius, return to Rome, and there you will regain your sight.' Getting up the following morning, he had no fear, but immediately got into a ship and came to Rome. After four months, he entered the city; he began to ascend the hill on the Via Salaria with a boy, feeling his way with a cane. And behold, Julian the emperor, travelling in his golden robes, saw Pigmenius from afar; recognizing him, he ordered him to be summoned. When he had been brought, Julian said to Pigmenius: 'Glory be to my gods and goddesses that I see you.' Pigmenius replied: 'Glory to my Lord, Jesus Christ, the crucified Nazarene, that I do not see you.'²⁴ In a rage, Julian ordered him to be thrown off a bridge into the Tiber. His body was recovered by a certain matron, named Candida, and buried in a crypt in the cemetery of Pontianus *ad Ursum Pileatum* ('at the bear with a felt cap'),²⁵ on 20 April.²⁶

²³ The cemetery *ad septem palumbas* ('at the seven doves') on the Via Salaria Vecchia at 'Cucumber Hill' (*Clivus Cucumeris*) is known to have housed the remains of a martyr named John; the fame of this John led to the cemetery being known by his name—*ad caput sancti Iohannis*. The seventh-century itineraries imply that there was a basilica, possibly hypogean, at the site, dedicated to this John: see Carletti, 'Esplorazioni dimenticate,' pp. 93–105; *idem*, 'Clivum Cucumeris (in) coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 114–18; *idem*, 'Cucumeris clivus', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 172–3; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 33–5. The location of the 'statue of the Sun', mentioned in the text, is unknown. A person named John (who is sometimes described as a priest) figures in a number of *passiones* as someone who recovers the bodies of martyrs (see XVI.35; XVIII App. 4 and 6; XX.8, 9, 19, 20, and 22; XXII.3; and XXXVI.1); but it is apparent that the present martyr named John has simply been lifted from the *passio* of SS. John and Paul (XVIII App. 4 and 6).

²⁴ As Delehaye pointed out (*Étude sur le légendier romain*, pp. 132–3), this brilliant anecdote—which is in effect the focal point of the entire *passio*—was not devised by the author of the *passio*, but was adapted from a story told in the Ecclesiastical Histories of Socrates, iii. 12 [*CPG* 6028: *PG* LXVII, col. 412] and Sozomen v. 4 [*CPG* 6030: *PG* LXVII, col. 1225], concerning one Maris, bishop of Chalcedon, and the emperor Julian. The author of the present *passio* presumably took the story from the Latin translation of Socrates and Sozomen by Cassiodorus, the so-called *Historia tripartita*, vi. 6. 2: 'Respondens vero Maris, "Ego", inquit, "Deo meo pro caecitate gratias ago, quia hoc ideo gestum, ne te videam pietate nudatum"' (ed. W. Jacob and R. Hanslik, *CSEL* LXXI, p. 317).

²⁵ On the cemetery of Pontianus, at the second mile of the Via Portuense, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86 with fig. 13; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 190–1; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9; as well as M. Ricciardi, 'Pontiani coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 213–19; *idem*, 'Ursum pileatum, ad', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 214–16; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 229–36, esp. 232–3 on the burial of St Pigmenius. Although the cemetery has been well explored—it housed the remains of the better-known saints Abdon and Sennes—the tomb of St Pigmenius has never been identified.

²⁶ This date (20 April) is not recorded in any martyrological source, and is possibly the result of scribal error. The death of St Pigmenius is recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 2 December: 'Rome, <in the cemetery of Pontianus>, the death of Pigmenius' (Appendix III, p. 657).

6. Because I have set down the triumphs of the saints at length, I do not think it absurd if I narrate, briefly and faithfully for the knowledge of the faithful, how Almighty God exacted vengeance on the cruel and wicked Julian after the passage of the blessed Pigmenius, priest and martyr, or how, through God's agency, this exceptionally cruel man lost his empire, together with his life, as I found it (explained) in *gesta*.²⁷ For at that same time, war with the Persians broke out against the emperor, and the emperor went to Persia. During his journey there, during an engagement, Julian the emperor was captured, and skinned alive from the top of his head down to the toes of his feet. And dyeing (his skin) with cochineal on the spot, seven kings of the Persians congratulated themselves on being able to sit on his skin when they were at peace. And thus it came about that he who had wickedly mistreated the bodies of the saints in this temporal life, was punished in body on earth with fitting torment, just as his soul was (punished) in hell. And so Pigmenius was executed through following Christ, Julian was killed imitating the devil. Pigmenius, having nothing, acquired the heavenly kingdom; Julian was plunged from his empire into hell. The one rejoices with the ministers of Christ, the other laments with wretched demons. Julian is surrounded with flames and chains, Pigmenius is pressed with the obeisance of angels. Julian is tormented in the depths of hell, Pigmenius rejoices with the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

²⁷ According to Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res gestae* xxv. iii. 1–23), Julian died of spear wounds while on campaign in Persia, while lying in his tent, surrounded by his Master of the Offices and other loyal troops; a similar account is found in Eutropius, *Breviarium* x. 16. The present story of him being flayed, and his skin dyed red and preserved as a trophy, has apparently been adapted from a legend concerning Valerian, who, like Julian, died in Persia (in AD 260), having been captured by the Persian king Shapur I (240–70). According to this legend, after his capture and death, Valerian was flayed by the Persian king, with his dried skin being dyed vermillion and preserved thereafter as a trophy of the Persians' victory over the Romans. This story is told in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* [CPL 91], v. 6: 'Postea vero quam pudendam vitam in illo dedecore finivit, derepta est ei cutis, et exuta visceribus pellis est infecta rubro colore, ut in templo barbarorum deorum ad memoriam clarissimi triumphii poneretur' (ed. J. L. Creed, *Lactantius: De mortibus persecutorum* (Oxford, 1984), p. 10); see also M. H. Dodgeon and S. N. C. Lieu (eds.), *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, AD 226–363: A Documentary History* (London and New York, 1991), pp. 57–65, esp. 58 (a translation of the relevant passage of Lactantius).

XXXIX

St Getulius

c.725; relevant to an unidentified basilica and cemetery at Colle dell'Orso near Ponte Sfondato (Via Salaria, thirtieth mile); to the church of St Primitivus at Castiglione (Via Prenestina, tenth mile); and the monastery of Farfa

This *passio* concerns a Christian scholar and teacher named Getulius, who lived in *Gabii* (modern Castiglione), some twelve miles from Rome on the Via Prenestina, during the principate of Hadrian, and who was martyred and buried at Ponte Sfondato, at the thirtieth mile from Rome on the Via Salaria.¹

The narrative is as follows. During the principate of Hadrian, a learned man named Getulius was teaching Christian doctrine in Sabine territory, in the town of *Gabii* (modern Castiglione, at the twelfth mile from Rome on the Via Prenestina) (c. 1). When Hadrian heard of this activity, he dispatched the deputy (*uicarius*), Cerealis, to arrest Getulius; but when Cerealis met up with Getulius, they engaged in discussion about Christian doctrine (c. 2). A brother of Getulius, named Amantius, who was a Christian in hiding but who in earlier days had been a tribune in Hadrian's service, joined Getulius in urging Cerealis to become a Christian (c. 3). Pope Sixtus I came from Rome in order to baptize Cerealis (c. 4). An imperial tax collector named Vincent came to *Gabii*, was confronted by Cerealis, and discovered that he had become a Christian, a fact which he immediately reported to Hadrian (c. 5). Hadrian then sent one Licinius as governor to Sabine territory, with orders to arrest Cerealis; when he arrived there, he set up a tribunal in Tivoli and had Cerealis, Getulius, and Amantius brought before him, and interrogated them concerning their Christianity (c. 6). Licinius ordered them to be flogged, and then to be

¹ Listed *BHL* 3524; discussed by Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, pp. 196–8; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 127–8 and 354–5; *BSS* VI, cols. 309–13 [B. Cignitti]; Mara, *I santi della Via Salaria*, pp. 113–33; Saxer, 'I santi e i santuari antichi', pp. 262–5; *idem*, 'Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie', pp. 36–7; Susi, 'I culti farfensi', pp. 64–75; Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 157–61, with pls. I and 12 ('Cimitero di S. Getulio'); Maggioni, 'La composizione della *Passio Zotici*', esp. pp. 138–52; Scorza Barcellona, 'I martiri Zotico, Amanzio, Cereale e Primitivo', esp. pp. 419–21; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', p. 237; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 126, n. 91b.

burned alive at a place at the thirtieth mile of the Via Salaria (c. 7). The flames did not harm Getulius, so the soldiers killed him by smashing his head with tree branches; his widow, Symphorosa, recovered his body and buried it in a catacomb on her estate at approximately the thirtieth mile of the Via Salaria (c. 8).

It is clear in the first place that the story of Getulius has been confected on the basis of statements in the earlier *passio* of St Symphorosa, where it was stated that Hadrian had ordered the execution of her husband, Getulius, and his brother, Amantius, both of whom were tribunes in Hadrian's service, because of their Christianity (XXXVII.2). The author of the present *passio* retained both these characters (although, in describing Getulius as a Christian teacher, he omitted to mention that he had ever been a military tribune), but he amplified his account by introducing Cerealis, the deputy sent to *Gabii* to arrest Getulius, and another martyr, named Primitivus, who is mentioned briefly in c. 6 as someone who was arrested, together with Cerealis, Amantius, and Getulius. (Three of these martyrs—Amantius, Cerealis, and Primitivus—figure in the later *passio* of SS. Zoticus, Amantius, Cerealis, and Primitivus (BHL 9028), which was confected in turn on the basis of the present *passio* of St Getulius.²) Our author altered the focus of the earlier work by making Getulius a Christian teacher, and by locating his martyrdom, and the catacomb in which he was buried, in the area of Ponte Sfondato, at approximately the thirtieth mile of the Via Salaria. At one time there was a church in this area dedicated to St Getulius, which is recorded for the first time in a document dated 724 in the archives of the nearby monastery of Farfa,³ a fact which led Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai to suggest that the present *passio* was composed by a monk of Farfa at approximately that time.⁴ The topographical detail concerning

² The *passio* of SS. Zoticus and companions (BHL 9028) was edited for the first time in 2001 by Maggioni, 'La composizione della *Passio Zotici*', at pp. 152–62. Maggioni demonstrated—convincingly, in my opinion—the dependence of the *Passio Zotici* on the *Passio Getulii* (*ibid.* pp. 147–52). More recently, however, Francesco Scorza Barcellona has argued that the dependence is the other way around: that the *passio* of Getulius is derived from the *Passio S. Zotici*, with Getulius, a saint culted at Farfa, replacing Zoticus, who was known from the cemetery bearing his name on the Via Labicana ('I martiri Zotico, Amanzio, Cereale e Primitivo', esp. pp. 429–37). On the cemetery of Zoticus at the tenth mile of the Via Labicana, see Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, p. 157, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 126–7.

³ Fiocchi Nicolai, *ibid.* The document in question is a charter in the *Regestum Farfense* recording the grant by Thrasimund, duke of Spoleto, of the church of St Getulius to Farfa: 'Donamus et concedimus aeccliesiam sancti Gethulii ubi ipsius corpus requiescit, ad meliorandum et disponendum ipsum sanctum locum' (ed. I. Giorgi and U. Balzani, *Il Regesto di Farfa di Gregorio di Catino*, 5 vols. (Rome, 1879–1914), II, pp. 26–7; cited by Maggioni, 'La composizione della *Passio Zotici*', p. 159, n. 45).

⁴ Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio : Sabina*, p. 157; cf. Maggioni, 'La composizione della *Passio Zotici*', p. 139, who suggests that the *Passio S. Getulii* was probably composed in the period between 724 and 749.

the area in which St Getulius was martyred and buried (and subsequently commemorated by a church), namely, the place where the Via Salaria crosses the river Farfa at Ponte Sfondato, at the twenty-ninth mile from Rome, suggests an author, perhaps a monk of Farfa, familiar with this locality.⁵

Text. The *passio* of St Getulius enjoyed very limited circulation in manuscript: *BHLms* lists twelve witnesses (of which one dates from s. ix², and two from s. x). The text was printed by Mombritius (I, pp. 586–7); the subsequent edition by the Bollandists (*Acta SS.*, *Iunii* II [1698], pp. 265–6) was based on collation of Mombritius and some *pervetusti manuscripti* (unspecified).⁶ More recently, Maria Grazia Mara produced an edition based on collation of some seven witnesses as well as the texts printed by Mombritius and the Bollandists.⁷ In spite of the wider manuscript base on which it is founded, Mara's text is unsatisfactory and at times incoherent. The present translation is therefore based on the text of the Bollandists (with collation of the editions of Mombritius and Mara), and adopts the Bollandists' chapter numbering.

1. In those days, in a time, as it were, far distant from now, it was decreed by the emperor Hadrian that in all cities, large as well as <small>,⁸ the personnel of the senate or the *curia* should be recorded and made public. And while this imperial command was being put into effect, Hadrian was inflamed with such great savagery, prompted by the devil, that he ordered Christians, wherever they might be found, to make offerings to him on the spot. At that same time there was a certain man named Getulius, a man most learned in every aspect of Christian teaching, in the territory of the Sabines, in the city of *Gabii*, not far from the city of Rome.⁹ This man, gathering about him daily a throng of Christians, offered food and sustenance to them all. And expounding to them the divine law, he had trained a great multitude, both from Greece as well as from that region of Italy. When the entire populace had observed this (happening) everywhere, and his preaching had been heard, the fame of Getulius spread widely.

⁵ Ponte Sfondato (the 'perforated bridge') is a natural stone bridge, caused by erosion, over the river Farfa, located less than a mile from the modern town of Torri. A branch of the Via Salaria (known today as the Via Ternana) crossed the river Farfa over the Ponte Sfondato.

⁶ These unspecified 'ancient manuscripts' very probably included one which still forms part of the Bollandists' library, MS. 14 (Loire region, s. ix^{2/4}), which is the oldest surviving manuscript of the *passio* of St Getulius. For the date and origin of MS. 14, see Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, I, no. 695.

⁷ Mara, *I martiri*, pp. 134–47 (with facing-page Italian translation); for the manuscripts and their relationships, see pp. 122–3 and 130–3.

⁸ The word *parvas* was omitted by Mombritius (and Mara), but supplied by the Bollandists. The first sentence of the text as printed by Mara (p. 134) is gibberish.

⁹ The ancient city of *Gabii* (modern Castiglione) was located at the twelfth mile of the Via Prenestina; see Coarelli, *Rome and Environs*, pp. 517–20.

2. When the emperor Hadrian heard of this, having dispatched the deputy (*uicarius*),¹⁰ Cerealis, to the aforementioned territory of the Sabines, he ordered that Getulius be arrested. And when Cerealis came to the city of *Gabii*, he found him in his house, sitting and teaching Christians who had flocked to him—as he was accustomed to do—and they were being strengthened in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ as a result of his teaching. Cerealis said to him: ‘Have you heard what our emperors commanded, and what is decreed to everyone?’ The blessed Getulius said: ‘Is it fitting that I obey the emperor’s command?’ Cerealis said to him: ‘Say in your own words if it is not fair.’ St Getulius said: ‘Therefore let the assessment be made.’ Cerealis said: ‘Put out your hand and sacrifice to the gods.’ To whom Getulius (replied): ‘It is fitting for us to worship God the Son of God, Who is the emperor of emperors, and fitting to hear Him, and not a mortal man, filled with worms.’ Cerealis said: ‘And God has a Son?’ Getulius said: ‘He has indeed; and He was, and is, because He Himself is the beginning.’ Cerealis replied: ‘In which doctrine or sign do I discover these things which you say to me? Make it so that I can recognize Him to be God the Son of God, which you promise.’ St Getulius said: ‘May you know this, because it is the word of God: God, Who is born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary—not from the blood, nor from the intention, nor from the seed of a man, but from God, the Lord was born, as the gospel attests, “He”, it says, “deigned to come in recent times so that He might raise up the dead, illuminate the blind, cleanse lepers, walk with His feet on the waters, command the winds and storms”.’¹¹ Cerealis the deputy said: ‘How can I know this happened? Tell me.’

3. St Getulius called to him his brother, named Amantius, a tribune who was in hiding for fear of the emperor Hadrian, and explained to him everything concerning Cerealis the deputy, because Cerealis and Amantius had always been welcome in the sight of Hadrian. Then St Getulius announced to Cerealis his brother, Amantius. When he saw him, he was filled with great joy.¹² Then St Getulius said to Cerealis: ‘Brother, lay aside these devilish practices, and put on the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ; for I, whom you see (before you),

¹⁰ It is a blatant anachronism to suggest that the post of ‘deputy’ (*uicarius*) of the praetorian prefect was in existence in the early second century AD: the post came into existence only with the redefinition of the praetorian prefecture under Diocletian and Constantine (see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 50–1, 100–3, and 370–2).

¹¹ In spite of Getulius’s assurance that what he says is attested in the gospel (*euangelista testante*), what follows is not a quotation, but a concatenation of phrases, stitched together from New Testament and patristic sources: *nouissimis temporibus* (1 Tim. 4: 1, 1 Pet. 1: 20; cf. Hebr. 1: 2); *dignatus est uenire* (Augustine, *Serm.* ccxciii. 12 [PL XXXVIII, col. 1335] and Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum* [Ps. VI]); *mortuos suscitaret* (Matt. 11: 5 and John 5: 21); *caecos illuminaret* (cf. Matt. 11: 5 as well as Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos* [Ps. CXLV] and Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum* [Ps. CXLV]); *leprosos mundaret* (Matt. 10: 8 and 11: 5); *mare pedibus ambularet* (Matt. 14: 26, Mark 6: 48, John 6: 19); and *uentis imperaret* (Matt. 8: 25–6; Luke 8: 24); etc.

¹² Matt. 2: 10 (‘gavisi sunt gaudio magno valde’).

abandoned my wife and sons and temporal property in the city of *Tibur* [modern Tivoli], and I sought true and eternal property.' Cerealis, the deputy, said: 'But I do not have a wife or sons whom I can abandon. But if something is eternal, do not hide it from me, and I will cast away men filled with death-bringing cleverness.' St Getulius said: 'This is eternal, that you believe Christ to be the Son of the living God, and that you cast away handmade idols.' Cerealis replied: 'In what way can I believe, so that nothing false remains in me?' His friend, Amantius the tribune, says to him: 'That you receive baptism in confessing Christ, and you will have eternal life; and if you abandon everything which you seem to possess temporally, you will receive a hundredfold return, and will possess eternal life.'¹³

4. Cerealis, the deputy, said: 'And what prevents me from shedding my blood on behalf of Christ, the Son of God? But do not delay your gift to me.' St Getulius said: 'Receive, therefore, what is good; and fast, and do penance, as I do.' They imposed on him a three-day fast, until he should receive a sign from God; and they remained in prayers and vigils throughout the night. When the entire night had been spent in vigils, they heard a voice, saying to all those who were present with the blessed Getulius and Amantius and Cerealis: 'Call Sixtus, the bishop of Rome, to you; he will perform your baptism.' And so they sent to the city of Rome, and having summoned the blessed Pope Sixtus,¹⁴ they went to a place in the territory of the Sabines in the city of *Gabii*, to a certain crypt; and the Pope performed the baptism according to Christian ceremony, and catechized him, and baptized him in the crypt in the town mentioned previously. That same hour, Cerealis saw the Holy Spirit descending upon him, and he immediately shouted out in a loud voice,¹⁵ 'Behold, I see a light brighter than the sun descending upon me.' Thereupon, the blessed Sixtus performed the sacrifice [i.e. mass], and made sacred offerings on behalf of each and every one of them; and they all participated in the holy body and blood of Christ, and were comforted; and he confirmed them in faith and constancy, giving thanks to God, (and) departed from them.

5. At that same time, officials began to look for Cerealis, and to mark out his whereabouts in their observations.¹⁶ A certain man named Vincent, a financial treasurer (*numeri arcarius*),¹⁷ came to the city of *Gabii* in order to collect

¹³ Matt. 19: 29 ('centuplum accipiet et vitam aeternam possidebit').

¹⁴ Sixtus I was pope for ten years in the years around AD 120 (i.e. during the principate of Hadrian), according to the *Liber pontificalis*; Eusebius gives his dates as 119–28 (*HE* iv. 4. 1 and iv. 5. 5); see *EP* I, pp. 216–17 [F. Scorza Barcellona].

¹⁵ Matt. 27: 46 ('clamavit Iesus voce magna').

¹⁶ The text printed by all editors (Mombritius, the Bollandists, Mara) is incomprehensible here: *in eumque obseruationibus aestuare/exestuare*; I omit *in* (with Mara) and understand *aestimare* in lieu of *aestuare* (*exestuare* Mara).

¹⁷ The *arcarii* were officials of the *res privata* who collected the rents of all land and house property belonging to the Imperial treasury; on the *res privata* and its officials, see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 412–27, with discussion of *arcarii* at p. 417.

payment in gold as public taxation. When he arrived there Cerealis, observing him, said to him: 'You should know that we have lost our temporal wealth in order to enjoy eternal (wealth), because we recognize temporal wealth, along with those who love it—kings and emperors, princes and potentates of this present life—to be nil and pointless.' Then Vincent shouted aloud, 'O emperors of the world and governors of the State—that a deputy, sustained by his appointment, has been seduced and has abandoned the gods in seeking phantoms!' And in great anger he ran off quickly, and reported these things to Hadrian—how Cerealis the deputy, caring nothing for the public finances, has confessed himself a Christian.

6. On hearing this, Hadrian, at that very hour, dispatched (as governor) a certain man named Licinius, of consular rank (*consularis*),¹⁸ with orders to bring Cerealis, the deputy, to him. When he arrived at the aforementioned place in Sabine territory, he arrested Cerealis, together with the blessed Getulius and Amantius, as well as Primitivus.¹⁹ And he immediately sent a letter to Hadrian, asking what orders Hadrian would give him. On hearing (the letter read out), Hadrian issued this command, that either they were to sacrifice to the gods, or else they were to be burned alive. On 10 March, the day on which the letter containing the orders of Hadrian was read out, Licinius ordered that a tribunal be set up for him in the city of *Tibur* [Tivoli], and for the aforementioned saints, bound in chains, to be brought before him. And when they had been brought in, he addressed them in these words, saying: 'Cerealis, have you so despaired of your life that you seem to have scorned the commands of the emperors who rule the entire world?' Cerealis replied: 'The public treasure (which I had) I handed over to the poor, its due term having been reached, and to my Lord, Jesus Christ,²⁰ Whom I promise to serve, and

¹⁸ Licinius is being conceived as the governor of the province of *Tuscia et Umbria* which, according to the *Notitia dignitatum*, was governed by a man of consular rank (see Jones, *LRE*, p. 1454). A man named L. Licinius Sura was consul for the second time in 102, and for the third time in 107 (the date of his first consulship is unrecorded: presumably he was suffect consul in a year before 102); see *PIR*¹ II, p. 285 [no. 174] and *PIR*² V, pp. 60–1 [no. 253]. That a person of this name is described as a 'consular' (*consularis*) is pure anachronism: the title *consularis* for the highest ranking provincial governor was one created by Constantine; Jones, *LRE*, pp. 106–7.

¹⁹ Primitivus has not previously been mentioned, but is known from other sources, such as the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, to have been a martyr of *Gabii* (modern Castiglione), where his martyrdom is commemorated on 10 July, 'at the twelfth mile of the Via Prenestina' (see Appendix III, p. 654). The remains of what was once the church of S. Primitivo at *Gabii* may still be seen at about the tenth mile of the Via Prenestina: see V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Su alcuni santuari martiriali di origine paleocristiana dipendenti dall'abbazia di Grottaferrata', *RACR* 82 (2006), 323–45, at 325–45 with figs. 8–9.

²⁰ The text printed by Mombricitus and Mara here reads: 'Et thesauros publicos de limatione perfecta tradidi publico'. In lieu of the meaningless *limatione* ('a filing away'? I understand *limitatione*, the 'due term' or 'limitation' of the lease on the Imperial property entrusted to Cerealis. (Note also that the *Passio S. Zotici* [BHL 9028], which is simply a *rifacciamento* of the *passio* of St Getulius, reads *limatione* at this point (Maggioni, 'La composizione della *Passio Zotici*', p. 158.)) The author of the redaction printed by the Bollandists was clearly puzzled by the

I believe that I will enjoy eternal life.’ Licinius said: ‘Tell me whether you wish to live or die.’ Cerealis replied to him: ‘If I did not desire to live, I would not have confessed Christ; for your sacrifice is as nothing.’ Then, in a rage, Licinius said to the blessed Getulius: ‘Sacrifice to the god(s) Jupiter and Mars, otherwise I will order you to breathe out your last.’ St Getulius said: ‘I shall not breathe out my life; for if I do not (sacrifice), I extend it more and more.’ And, smiling, he rejoiced in the Lord.²¹

7. But Licinius, inflamed with anger, ordered (him) to be stripped and beaten, saying: ‘Do not scorn the commands of the emperors, and obey the great gods.’ And while he was being beaten at length, Getulius, praising the Lord, said in a clear voice: ‘I give thanks to God Almighty and to the Lord Jesus Christ, since I am offering Him a pure sacrifice.’²² Licinius said, ‘What is a “pure sacrifice”?’ The blessed Getulius said, ‘A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart God does not despise.’²³ Licinius said: ‘Lift them up from the ground, and put them in public prison in the aforementioned town [*Tibur*].’ And they remained in prison for twenty-seven days. And, coming to Rome, <Licinius> reported everything which had been done. Then Hadrian, filled with rage, sent his soldiers with orders to burn them alive. And they were taken to ‘Goat’s Farm’ (*in fundo capreo*)²⁴ on the Via Salaria, at more or less the thirtieth mile from Rome, on the river Tiber, in the territory of the Sabines;²⁵ and they committed them to the flames, with their hands and feet bound and after additional beatings.

mention of the ‘due term’ (*limitatione*), and altered and simplified the text so as to read, ‘Thesaurum quem habui perfecte tradidi pauperibus’, ‘The treasure which I had I handed over entirely to the poor’.

²¹ Cf. Ps. 32: 1 (‘Exultate iusti in Domino’).

²² Getulius is here quoting Mal. 1: 11. But whereas the Vulgate at this point reads *oblatio munda*, earlier African versions of the Old Testament apparently read *sacrificium mundum*, as is clear from the Vetus Latina database (Brepolis), which records quotations by Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* [CPL 14], iii. 22. 6: ‘et in omni loco sacrificium nomini meo offertur, et sacrificium mundum, gloriae scilicet relatio et benedictio et laus et hymni’ (CCSL I, p. 539); by Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* [CPL 39], i. 16: ‘et in omni loco odores incensi offeruntur nomini meo et sacrificium mundum, quoniam magnum est nomen meum apud gentes, dicit Dominus’ (CCSL III, p. 17); and frequently by Augustine: *Epp.* xciii. 6 and clxxxv. 1: ‘ab ortu solis usque ad occasum sacrificium mundum offertur nomini meo’ (CSEL XXXIV/2, p. 465 and LVII, p. 4, respectively), *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus* xxxv. 7: ‘quoniam ab ortu usque ad occasum, sacrificium mundum offertur nomini meo’ (CCSL XXXVI, p. 321); etc.

²³ Ps. 50: 19.

²⁴ As Flocchi Nicolai points out, the *fundus Capreus* mentioned here, and the *locus nuncupatus Capris*, mentioned in the following chapter, correspond to an estate entitled *fundus Capriolis*, the name of which survives in the modern place name *Capreola*, which is recorded in charters as being in the ownership of the nearby monastery of Farfa (*I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, pp. 159–61). This estate was located in the vicinity of Ponte Sfondato, on the river Farfa, at ‘more or less the thirtieth mile from Rome’ (in fact at the twenty-ninth mile: see following note).

²⁵ The author is referring to the vicinity of the natural stone bridge known as the Ponte Sfondato, at approximately the twenty-ninth mile from Rome on the Via Salaria; see n. 3. There

8. But the fire was in no way able to burn the blessed Getulius,²⁶ but he was comforted all the more in the Lord. And, his chains having fallen off, he walked about in the midst of all the onlookers, praising Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And the soldiers, seeing that all their efforts were for naught, because the fire could in no way consume him, smashed in his head, while beating him with uprooted branches of vines; calling on the Lord, he gave up the ghost.²⁷ His wife, named Symphorosa, recovered his holy body, and buried him with honour and distinction at her country seat in the territory of the Sabines, in a place called *Capris* in the aforementioned town, across the river, in a catacomb on her estate,²⁸ with our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, reigning together with the Father and Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

was an ancient church of S. Getulio in this vicinity, supposedly erected at the site of the martyr's burial. This church is first recorded in a document in the archives of Farfa, dated 724 (Fiocchi Nicolai, *ibid.* p. 159). No trace of the church remains, but what may have been the catacomb in which Getulius was interred was identified in 1966 by Carmelo Cristiano: see n. 28.

²⁶ The implication (not spelled out) is that Cerealis, Amantius, and Primitivus died while being burned alive, and that only Getulius survived the flames.

²⁷ Cf. Matt. 27: 50 ('voce magna emisit spiritum').

²⁸ A matron named Symphorosa, who was martyred with her seven sons, is the subject of the *passio* in her name, translated above, no. XXXVII, where she is said to have been the widow of Getulius (XXXVII.2), who is there described as the brother of Amantius (as here), but is there said to have been a tribune of Hadrian. In 1966, Carmelo Cristiano discovered two underground galleries of a catacomb at the village of Colle dell'Orso, a short distance from the Ponte Sfondato, which is possibly to be identified as the original burial site—the *arenarium* of the present *passio*—of St Getulius; see C. Cristiano, 'Andando alla ricerca della storia di San Getulio', in *I santi Sabini. Studi e ricerche* (Poggio Mirteto, 1975), pp. 11–33; *idem*, 'Note di topografia agiografica nella Sabina paleocristiana', in *Paleocristiano in Bassa Sabina* (Rome, 1980), pp. 65–111, at 90–1; Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Cimiteri paleocristiani e insediamenti', pp. 115–16 and 120–1, n. 17; and *idem*, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Sabina*, p. 161.

XL

St Basilides

c.650 × c.700; relevant to an unidentified shrine at *Lorium* (Castel di Guido) (Via Aurelia, twelfth mile)

This brief *passio* concerns a martyr who, as we know from other martyrological sources, was buried on the Via Aurelia; but the *passio* itself contains no information about when or where he was martyred, or how he came to be buried on the Via Aurelia.¹ The one redeeming merit of the *passio* is the evidence of its author's learning, reflected notably in his account of the absurdities of the pagan gods in c. 3, and his ambitious but doomed attempt to elevate the style of his narrative by including two hexameter prayers, allegedly delivered by the saint.

The narrative is as follows. While in the employment of a prefect somewhere in the eastern empire, St Basilides was instructed by Christ in a vision to return to his homeland, the Italian province of 'Aurelia', where there is known to be a tyrant who persecutes disciples of Christ (c. 1). Basilides proceeds to Aurelia and is duly arrested and interrogated by the tyrant, Aurelian (c. 2). In his discussion with Aurelian, Basilides gives a detailed denunciation of the absurdity of belief in the pagan gods (cc. 3–4). Aurelian orders Basilides to be tortured (c. 5). Ultimately, Basilides is sentenced to capital punishment; Christians recover his body and bury it in a fitting place, the name or location of which is not specified (c. 6).

The *passio* of Basilides is wholly devoid of chronological or topographical indications, save the mention of the non-existent Roman province of 'Aurelia'. There is no way of knowing when the martyrdom is supposed to have taken place, since no emperor or consul is mentioned at any point. The only clarification concerning where Basilides was buried and culted comes from martyrological sources. The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* has the following

¹ Listed *BHL* 1018 and *CPL* 2168; for discussion, see Dufourcq, *Gesta*, I, p. 235; Kirsch, 'Le memorie dei martiri', pp. 86–91; *idem*, *Die stadtrömische christliche Festkalender*, pp. 60–3; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, I, pp. 508–9; *BSS* II, col. 904 [F. Caraffa]; Saxer, 'Il culto dei santi nelle diocesi suburbicarie', pp. 46–7; Lanéry, 'Hagiographie', pp. 327–8; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 283–4.

entry against 12 June: 'Rome, at the fifth mile of the Via Aurelia, Basilides' (Appendix III, p. 654). The reference to the Via Aurelia is presumably correct, but the indication of the location—at the fifth mile—is wrong. A correct indication of the location is given by the 'Malmesbury Itinerary', which states that the shrine of Basilides was the fifth of those located on the Via Aurelia, and was to be found 'at the twelfth mile' (Appendix IV (c) [§14], p. 666). A location at the twelfth mile corresponds to the ancient town of *Lorium*, near present-day Castel di Guido.² In the eighteenth century, Marc'Antonio Boldetti discovered a small catacomb at the twelfth mile, which he said lay just past the hamlet of Bottaccia, on the right-hand side of the Via Aurelia, at a slope in the road as it heads towards the town of Castel di Guido.³ Unfortunately, however, no trace either of a basilica or of a cemetery has been found in the vicinity, in spite of repeated attempts to locate them by Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai.⁴ Our knowledge of this martyr must rest, unfortunately, on the unreliable and vague witness of the present *passio*.

The text of this *passio* [BHL 1018] was thought by Cécile Lanéry to be a Carolingian reworking of an earlier, perhaps seventh-century, *passio*, listed by the Bollandists as BHL 1019.⁵ In my view, the relationship is better explained on the assumption that our present text, BHL 1018, is the earlier composition, perhaps datable to the late seventh century, possibly composed at *Lorium*, and possibly prompted by the entry for Basilides in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary', and the text listed as BHL 1019 is a later redaction composed by someone, perhaps in the ninth century, who wished to provide concrete detail in place of the vagueness of the earlier work, and in doing so created a preposterous tale involving Basilides and two companions (Tripodus and Mendalus), and located their sanctuary at the eighth mile of the Via Aurelia—where, however, there was the well-attested sanctuary of SS. Rufina and Secunda. Amore suggested, plausibly, that the redaction which is BHL 1019 was produced by a cleric of the church of SS. Rufina and Secunda.⁶

Text. The *passio* of St Basilides [BHL 1018] enjoyed very modest circulation: BHLms lists twenty witnesses, mostly late medieval, and only one of which was as early as the ninth century. The text translated here is that of Mombricitus (I, pp. 153–5); a text was subsequently printed by the Bollandists, *Acta SS., Iunii* II [1698], pp. 507–8, but this edition is based solely on the text of Mombricitus,

² See esp. Fiocchi Nicolai, *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Etruria meridionale*, pp. 29–32 ('Basilica e cimitero di S. Basilde'); and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 283.

³ M. Boldetti, *Osservazioni sopra i cimiterj de'santi martiri ed antichi cristiani di Roma* (Vatican City, 1720), p. 538; and cf. Tomassetti and Tomassetti, *La campagna romana*, II, pp. 492–3.

⁴ *I cimiteri paleocristiani del Lazio: Etruria meridionale*, p. 30: 'Nonostante la precisa indicazione dello studioso [sc. Boldetti] e i ripetuti tentativi da me compiuti, il monumento oggi non risulta più rintracciabile.'

⁵ 'Hagiographie', p. 323.

⁶ Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 284.

without further collation of manuscript witnesses. The Bollandists did, however, correct a number of the most blatant errors in the text of Mombritius (see following notes). The chapter numbering is that introduced by the Bollandists.

1. When the pagan persecution was afflicting the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ through nearly the entire world, and was killing them with various tortures, the blessed Basilides was in an eastern city under the jurisdiction of the prefect Plato,⁷ holding to the path of sacred religion. The Lord had said to him: 'It is not fitting for you to serve this (earthly) lord; but it is rather more fitting for you to undertake a mighty struggle for My name.' The blessed Basilides replied to Him: 'My Lord, Master of all miracles, I am prepared to undergo the torture of all punishments on Your behalf.' And the Lord: 'Blessed', He said, 'are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'⁸ On hearing this, Basilides went to the aforementioned prefect, pointing out to him that he had been in his service for twenty-five years, and that it was now time for him to visit his parents, and (to find out) whether they were breathing the air of life, or not. The prefect questioned him: 'In what province do your parents live?' And the saint (replied): 'In a province in Italy which is called Aurelia.'⁹ The prefect replied, saying, 'I have heard from many people concerning that province, that one Aurelian, a resident of that province, inflicts many torments on the disciples of Christ; therefore you must be very apprehensive while you are there that he does not hear that you are His disciple, and order you to be afflicted with severe punishments.' Basilides replied to him: 'If I should be worthy to be associated with the achievements of the blessed martyrs for the honour of my Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, I will tolerate severe tortures. For whatever we suffer in this world is nothing in comparison with the heavenly reward which God promised to those who love Him.'

2. Hearing this, the prefect said: 'Go, and come back to me after one year.' When he heard this, Basilides began to hasten to his homeland. But during the journey, he prayed to God as follows:

Almighty, eternal God, You Who created all things,
Who restore the wretched, Who bestow worthy (rewards)
on those who seek them,

⁷ The author is vague about dates, magistracies and place-names. In this case it is probable that this 'Plato' is being conceived as the praetorian prefect of the diocese of the East (embracing the provinces of Thrace, *Asiana*, *Pontica*, and *Oriens*), on which see Jones, *LRE*, pp. 370–1.

⁸ Matt. 5: 10.

⁹ There was no such thing as an Italian 'province' of *Aurelia*. The name suggests territory to the northwest of Rome, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, reached by the Via Aurelia. Lanzoni suggested, very plausibly, that the names of the province (*Aurelia*), of the city (also *Aurelia*), and of the persecuting tyrant (*Aurelian*) all derive from knowledge of the sanctuary of Basilides on the Via Aurelia: 'Forse la Via Aurelia ha suggerito all'autore la *provincia Aurelia*, la *urbs Aurelia* e *Aurelianus*' (*Le diocesi*, I, p. 509).

Who lift up those fallen servants who are lying at death's door
and kindly open up the heavenly kingdom to everyone:
show me in Your mercy the way which leads to the city
Aurelia, that I may thereafter see my dear parents.¹⁰

When this prayer was finished and Basilides was proceeding to Aurelia, he entered the home of his parents. It is revealed at once to the hearing of the cruel tyrant that a certain man of holy religion had entered the city, and immediately he ordered his soldiers to look for the saint throughout the entire province. When he was discovered in the home of his parents, it was reported to the tyrant. Then this agent of wicked deeds ordered the saintly man to come to him in mighty haste. <On being interrogated>,¹¹ the steadfast athlete of the Lord replied: 'I am the servant of Jesus Christ, and I serve Him alone.' To this the tyrant said: 'Have you heard that I inflict many punishments on His disciples?' And the saint said: 'I have heard of your punishments; but I did not fear them; hence I came here, so that I might deserve to receive the palm of martyrdom from the Lord.'

3. Hearing this Aurelian said: 'And therefore, as it seems to me, you have come in order to suffer similar things.' The blessed Basilides replied, saying: 'I consider you and your tortures as nothing, because if death should overtake you, you will suffer more severe tortures in the company of your father the devil—(tortures) which have no end, and which offer no period of respite.' The tyrant, filled with rage, said, 'Offer libations to the gods, and deny that you are His disciple. For if you will not do this, you will die from the tortures of punishment.' And the saint said to this: 'What good are the punishments which you specify, which have an end and which cannot last for long? And what good are the most wicked of men, which you call gods, to whom you believe you can compel me to offer libations?'¹² For I know that Jupiter had sexual congress with his sister, and deprived Juno, the daughter of Saturn, of

¹⁰ This poem (consisting of six hexameters) is not listed in *ICL*. It is a piece of hackwork, made up of poetic clichés from Late Latin poets stitched together: *omnipotens aeternae Deus* ('Almighty, eternal God'): Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei* ii. 1; Caelius Sedulius, *Carmen paschale* i. 60; *morte iacentes* ('lying at death's door'): Claudian, *De bello Gothico* 448; *caelestia regna* ('heavenly kingdom'): Iuvencus, *Euang.* iii. 526, iv. 197; Damasus, *Epigr.* vii. 3, xciii. 10; Alcimus Avitus, *Carm.* vi. 302; and Arator, *Hist. apost.* i. 942, i. 972, etc. The poet's metrical incompetence is revealed in the hiatus in line 6 (*cernam | exinde*).

¹¹ Something has fallen out of Mombritius' text at this point; I supply *interrogatus* in order to restore coherency to the conversation between Basilides and the tyrant.

¹² For the following list of wicked men transformed into gods, cf. a similar list in the pseudo-Cyprian treatise, *Quod idola dii non sint* [CPL 57], c. 2: 'Melicerta et Leucothea praecipitantur in maria, et fiunt postmodum maris numina. Castores alternis moriuntur ut vivant. Aesculapius ut in Deum surgat fulminatur. Hercules ut hominem exuat Oeteis ignibus concrematur. Apollo Admeti pecus pavit. Laomedonti muros Neptunus instituit, nec mercedem operis infelix structor accipit...' (PL IV, cols. 586–7). Some of the present author's wording appears to derive from this treatise, but there are many learned details which must have been derived from other sources.

her virginity, for which he was found worthy to be numbered¹³ among the gods.¹⁴ I know that Hercules, deceived by his love of Proserpina, descended to the depths of hell and then brought her back¹⁵ to the upper regions.¹⁶ I know that Apollo fed the cattle of King Admetus, next to the river Amphrysus,¹⁷ and that things such as these aroused the Sybil to diabolic frenzy in her Cumaean¹⁸ cave. I know that Melicerta and Leucothea were thrown into the sea and thereafter were called sea-goddesses.¹⁹ I know that Asclepius was struck by lightning, and did not accept payment for his work.²⁰ These were all exceedingly wicked men, who after their deaths began to be worshipped by wretched men. Thence temples were dedicated to them. Thence idols were cast to embody the likenesses of these dead people, to whom they offer sacrifices and whom they celebrate by paying them respect on their feast days. Abandoning their Creator, Whom it is fitting for all creatures to worship, and to offer praise to Him at all times, they worshipped what they had made themselves, and feared and venerated them.'

4. On hearing these things, Aurelian, the wicked judge, ordered him to be thrust back into prison, and his mouth to be smashed by fists. And the blessed Basilides, praying to God, said: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Who do not desert Your servants amidst the torments of torturers, but rather console them: command

¹³ Reading *numerari* with the Bollandists for Mombritius' nonsensical *munerari*.

¹⁴ Jupiter's sons by Juno, his sister, were Vulcan and Mars.

¹⁵ I follow the Bollandists in omitting Mombritius' meaningless *mihi* after *et* (*et mihi eam ad superiores partes reduxisse*).

¹⁶ Is the author thinking of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice (Ovid, *Met.* xi. 61–6)? Hercules was said to have brought Cerberus, the hound of hell, from Hades to the upper regions, as his Twelfth Labour (Ovid, *Met.* vii. 410, ix. 185).

¹⁷ For Apollo feeding the cattle of Admetus, cf. Tibullus, *Eleg.* ii. 3. 11 ('pavit et Admeti tauros formosus Apollo') and Ovid, *Ars amatoria* ii. 239 ('Cynthiaus Admeti vaccas pavissee Phraei'). The river Amphrysus in Thessaly is mentioned in Ovid, *Met.* i. 580 and vii. 229.

¹⁸ The text of Mombritius has the nonsensical reading *humano* here ('haec humano antro Sybylam diabolico exagitasse furore'). The Bollandists rightly corrected this to *Cumano*, 'Cumaean', an easy corruption from *humano* (for the adjective used in connection with the Sybil's cave, cf. Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* i. 10: 'quas in Cumano antro post Sibyllam...carpebant'); also possible, though less so, is corruption from *immane* ('vast') under the influence of Vergil, *Aen.* vi. 10–11 ('horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae / antrum immane petit').

¹⁹ These two gods are treated sequentially in Ovid, *Met.* iv. 512–30 [Melicerta] and iv. 531–42 [Leucothea]; cf. also the prosaic explanation in the 'Second Vatican Mythographer', ii. 100: 'Ino uero maritum suum ubi furere et se persequi conspexit, Melicertam alterum filium arripiens se cum illo praecipitavit in mare, qui postmodum in deos marinos conuersi sunt, Melicerta in Portunum qui Graece Palemon dicitur, Ino in marinam deam quae Graece dicitur Leucothea' (CCSL XCI C, p. 174). Note that the author of the *passio* mistakenly assumed that Melicerta was female.

²⁰ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* xxii. 7 ('Aesculapius ut in deum surgat fulminatur'), a sentence repeated verbatim in the above-mentioned pseudo-Cyprian treatise, *Quod idola dii non sunt*: above, n. 12. The second part of the sentence—'and did not accept payment for his work' (*nec mercedem operis accepisse*) has been lifted absent-mindedly from the description of Neptune's work for Laomedon in the same treatise, as quoted above, n. 12 ('nec mercedem operis infelix structor accepit').

that I, Your tiny sheep, may come to You—I, who do not cease from tolerating the tortures inflicted on me for Your name. For You said, “Do not fear those who kill the body; they cannot kill the soul”.²¹ Following this assurance, I handed my body to the torturers, so that You can wipe my soul clean of all sins, and can make me live with You in eternity, Who are blessed forever and ever.’ When he had poured out these and other prayers, he began to arm himself with heavenly weaponry, so that he could take the struggle of battle to the wicked enemy. After three days, the cruel tyrant ordered the soldier of Christ to leave the prison and be brought into his presence. Interrogating him with grim visage, he said: ‘You have overlooked your error. Who allows you to suffer such things?’ The athlete of Christ (replied): ‘You wretch, if only you were to know yourself, you would not say that I was in error, but rather that you would judge yourself to be in error. Listen, if you wish to know how you err: you do not worship the One God Who created everything and Who made even you for this (purpose), that you would worship Him and not adore sculptured stones. For others like you, held in thrall by a similar error, adored a bird or a foul cow or a twisted dragon, others a half-human dog, and others, having lost their wits, affirmed that the sun is the creator of all things, because it is seen to illuminate the whole sky and pour clear light on to the earth. Others offered prayers to the moon, which is seen to wax and wane. And others propitiated the stars, which are illuminated by the light of the sun. Others worshipped water, and others fire, but did not dare to join the two, because they are seen to be inimical to each other. Others placed altars at the roots of trees, and inaugurated feasts, and adored the weeping branches, so that they would govern their children and their home and their beloved fields, and the fidelity of their wives, and their slaves, and their wealth. Some venerated vegetables, and in their gentle gardens watered dry herbs. I have now ridiculed the monstrous things <through>²² which you and those like you, in worshipping (them), have fallen into a dark pit, things which your insanity now worships and is compelling me, a soldier of Christ, to worship.’

5. On hearing these things, Aurelian, the enemy of truth, said: ‘Now, wretch, be silent, and do not blaspheme the gods, because savage tortures are being prepared for you.’ The blessed Basilides, protected by the helmet of Christ,²³ said: ‘Why does such madness possess you,²⁴ who, having abandoned your

²¹ Matt. 10: 28.

²² The sentence, as printed by Mombritius (and reprinted by the Bollandists), is incoherent; I supply *per* before *quae*: *derisi monstra <per> quae tu et similes tui...cecididunt in atram foueam*.

²³ Judging from the databases, the phrase *galea Christi* does not occur earlier than Sedulius Scottus in the mid ninth century, *Carm.* viii. 14: ‘macte lorica galeaque Christi’ (MGH, Poetae Aevi Carolini Latini III, p. 176).

²⁴ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* v. 465: ‘infelix, quae tanta animus dementia cepit’.

Creator, adore useless monstrosities and call them gods? O unhappy man, when you beseech wood and stones, you are seen to be addressing deaf things. Wood is useful in this way: that sometimes it is cut up, and is used to reinforce the roofing of houses. Sometimes it is put on hearth fires, so that it may prepare cooked food for people. Likewise with the stones which your madness does not refrain from calling gods.' Having listened to all this, the cruellest of tyrants said: 'Apply more savage tortures to him, and in the end smash him with lead-weighted whips until he ceases to blaspheme the gods.' At length, the unyielding soldier of Christ, while suffering all this, said: 'O tinder of the eternal fire, perpetrator of all crimes, you are butchering me as if I were a fool, because I ridiculed the monstrosities of your gods. But I willingly tolerate your tortures for the eternal glory which my Lord Jesus Christ promised to His faithful. And however much I am afflicted by severe punishments, so much the more do I believe myself to be blessed with heavenly joys.' Then Aurelian said: 'Most wicked of all men, I will not comply with your contumacy.' And the saint: 'I shall not cease to speak the truth, because I am a witness to the truth. You exist as the slave of demons, and as the sacrilegious assailant of Christians; I am a soldier of Christ, and the preserver of the holy faith.'

6. Having heard this, the tyrant, inflamed with even greater fury, began to reflect on how he could kill him with a cruel death; seeing that nothing would avail, he at length pronounced the capital sentence on him. And the executioner, seizing him, led him outside the city; when they arrived there, the devout athlete prayed to God, saying, 'Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in its might; your right hand shattered Your enemies; the right hand of Your power exalted me'.²⁵

Now mercifully receive, I pray, greatest Master,
the soul of Basilides, Your servant, with the praise of a triumph:
may You join it, O Creator of heaven, to the heavenly hosts.²⁶

When these prayers were finished, fortifying himself with the sign of the Cross, he stretched out his neck, and immediately his head was struck off. The Christians, therefore, on witnessing the constancy of so great a man, praised the God Who acquires such servants; and, recovering the holy body, they placed

²⁵ Ps. 117: 16 ('*dextera Domini fecit uirtutem, dextera Domini exaltauit me, dextera Domini fecit uirtutem*').

²⁶ This poem (consisting of three hexameters) is not listed in *ICL*. Like its predecessor (above, n. 10), it is a piece of hackwork, made up of poetic clichés from Late Latin poets stitched together: *suscipe quaeso* ('receive, I pray'): Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* i. 17. 1; *summe magister* ('greatest Master'): Corippus, *Iohannis* vi. 319, vii. 52; *laude triumphi* ('praise of triumph'): Dracontius, *Romulea* v. 232, viii. 303; *coetibus angelicis* ('heavenly hosts'): Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* viii. 35; Aldhelm, *Carmen de uirginitate* 1070.

it in a fitting place, where the bounties of miracles do not cease to abound for those worthily seeking them. The blessed servant of God, Basilides, suffered martyrdom on 12 June,²⁷ to the praise and glory of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

²⁷ See the entry for 12 June in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: 'Rome, at the fifth mile of the Via Aurelia, Basilides' (Appendix III, p. 654). The distance from Rome specified in this entry is clearly mistaken, and should read 'at the twelfth mile', as in the 'Malmesbury Itinerary' (Appendix IV (c) [§14], p. 666); see also p. 626.

APPENDIX I

The *Depositio martyrum* (AD 354)

The text known as the *Depositio martyrum* is preserved as part of a much larger compilation known as the work of the ‘Chronographer of 354’, compiled and lavishly illustrated in that year by Furius Dionysius Filocalus (the calligrapher of Pope Damasus: see Appendix II), and printed *in extenso* by Theodor Mommsen.¹ The *Depositio martyrum* was compiled somewhat earlier than 354, probably in 336;² it thus dates from a generation or so after the end of the ‘Great Persecution’ (which in Rome and Italy had probably ceased by 306), when memories of martyrdoms were still fresh. The list contains the names of thirty-eight Roman martyrs, commemorated on twenty-three separate feast days. It is principally concerned with martyrs preserved in suburban Roman cemeteries (extended so as to include Ostia, Porto, and Albano); it is not known how the list was compiled, or how dates were assigned to the various feasts, or why some martyrs were commemorated but others forgotten.³ In the manuscript, the *Depositio martyrum* is preceded by a very brief *Depositio episcoporum* (a list of where the popes of Rome were buried, up to and including Pope Julius, who died in 352);⁴ this list is printed here following the translation of the *Depositio martyrum*.

I provide a translation of the work as it is printed by Mommsen (including the commemorations which in no sense pertain to Roman martyrs—e.g. the birth of Christ on 25 December in Bethlehem, or SS. Perpetua and Felicitas in Africa). I give calendar dates in modern, rather than Roman, reckoning: 20 January, rather than *XIII Kal. Feb.*, and I have standardized the orthography of Roman names for the sake of consistency with those given in the *passiones* translated above. The formula used by the compiler is that the martyr’s name is given in the genitive, followed by the cemetery (i.e. suburban catacomb) in which s/he was buried. For ease of consultation, I supply (in square brackets and bold print) references to burials of Roman martyrs mentioned in the *passiones* translated above.

¹ ‘Chronographus anni CCCLIII’, *MGH, AA IX* [1892], pp. 13–148; the *Depositio martyrum* is at pp. 71–2 (the text of the *Depositio martyrum* is also printed by Duchesne, *LP I*, pp. 2–12; by H. Leclercq in *DACL VIII/1* [1928], cols. 634–40; by Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, II, pp. 17–28; and by Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 18–20). On the work as a whole, see H. Stern, *Le calendrier de 354. Étude sur son texte et ses illustrations* (Paris, 1953); Salzman, *On Roman Time*; and, more recently, R. Burgess, ‘The Chronograph of 354: Its Manuscripts, Contents, and History’, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5 (2012), 354–96.

² On the date, see Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 126–7, and *EEC I*, pp. 228–9 [V. Saxer].

³ It is odd, for example, that no mention is made in the *Depositio martyrum*—or indeed in any surviving Roman *passio*—of St Ignatius, who was brought from Antioch to Rome and executed there; see Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, pp. 77–81 (who assigns the martyrdom to approximately AD 107, the traditional date), and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, pp. 15–19 (who argues that the martyrdom of Ignatius probably took place during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–61)).

⁴ Ed. Mommsen, *MGH, AA IX* [1892], pp. 73–6; also ed. Valentini and Zuchetti, *Codice topografico*, II, pp. 12–16.

December

[25 December] The birth of Christ in Bethlehem in Judea.

January

[20 January] Fabian, in the cemetery of Callistus;⁵ and Sebastian, *ad catacumbas* [III.88].⁶

[21 January] Agnes, on the Via Nomentana [XVII.13].⁷

February

[22 February] The feast of St Peter's elevation to the *cathedra*.

March

[7 March] Perpetua and Felicitas, in Africa.

May

[19 May] Parthenius and Calogerus, in the cemetery of Callistus, in the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian [= AD 304] [XXXIII.6].

June

[29 June] Peter, *ad catacumbas*, and Paul, on the Via Ostiense, in the consulship of Tuscus and Bassus [= AD 258].⁸

July

[10 July] Felix and Philip, in the cemetery of Priscilla;⁹ and, in the cemetery of the Giordani,¹⁰ Martial, Vitalis, and Alexander; and in the cemetery of

⁵ On the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 208–14, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 143–77, as well as L. Spera, 'Cal(l)isti coemeterium, Via Appia', *LTUR. Suburbium*, II, pp. 32–44, and Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, 'Relire Styger', pp. 121–61. There is a popular but well-illustrated introduction to this important cemetery by Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callistus*; and see also no. IV (p. 141, n. 10).

⁶ On the cemetery *ad catacumbas* on the Via Appia, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 216–31, and esp. Nieddu, *La Basilica Apostolorum*, esp. pp. 45–148; see also (briefly) *eadem*, 'S. Sebastiani ecclesia, basilica', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 51–7, as well as no. III (p. 91, n. 5).

⁷ On the cemetery of St Agnes on the Via Nomentana, see *DACL* I/1, cols. 918–65 [H. Leclercq]; Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 379–97; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 243–6; Frutaz, *Il complesso*, pp. 25–7; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 141–3; P. M. Barbini, 'S. Agnetis basilica, coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 33–6; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 74–6, as well as no. XVII (p. 360, n. 27).

⁸ On the commemoration of SS. Peter and Paul at the catacombs on the Via Appia in 258 (i.e. at the outbreak of the persecution under Valerian), see H. Chadwick, 'St Peter and St Paul in Rome: The Problem of the *memoria apostolorum ad catacumbas*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1957), 31–52; Testini provides a full discussion of the various competing theories according to which the apostles came to be commemorated *ad catacumbas* (*Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 224–30).

⁹ On the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nuova, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 461–558; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 254–60; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 46–50; Tolotti, *Il cimitero di Priscilla*, esp. pp. 107–34 and 316–21; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 130–7; R. Giuliani, 'Priscillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 262–9; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 59, with discussion of SS. Felix and Philip at pp. 59–60; and no. I (p. 46, n. 4).

¹⁰ On the cemetery of the Giordani (*coemeterium Iordanorum*) on the Via Salaria Nuova, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 453–61; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 252–4; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 41–6; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 125–8; P. De Santis, 'Iordanorum coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 89–93, with fig. 89; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 57–8; and no. I (p. 46, n. 5).

Maximus,¹¹ Silvanus (the Novatians stole this martyr Silvanus); and in the cemetery of Praetextatus,¹² Ianuarius [cf. I.5].

[30 July] Abdon and Sennes, in the cemetery of Pontianus,¹³ which is (located) *ad Ursum pileatum* ('the bear with a felt cap') [VI.3, XVI.10].

August

[6 August] Pope Sixtus II, in the cemetery of Callistus [VI.4; XVI.18]; and in the cemetery of Praetextatus, Agapitus and Felicissimus [XVI.18].

[8 August] Secundus, Carpofores, Victorinus, and Severianus, at Albano; and on the Via Ostiense, at the *ballistaria* at the seventh mile,¹⁴ Cyriacus, Largus, Crescentianus, Memmia, Juliana, and Smaragdus [cf. XX.8, 10].

[10 August] Laurence, on the Via Tiburtina [VI.7, XVI.29].¹⁵

[13 August] Hippolytus, on the Via Tiburtina [VI.8, XVI.31];¹⁶ and Pontianus,¹⁷ in the cemetery of Callistus.

[22 August] Timothy, on the Via Ostiense.¹⁸

[28 August] Hermes, in the cemetery of Bassilla,¹⁹ on the Via Salaria Vecchia [XXXII.14].

¹¹ On the cemetery of Maximus on the Via Salaria Nuova, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 427–39; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 250–1; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 37–9; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 121–3; F. Bisconti, 'Maximi coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium*, IV, pp. 60–1; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 39–48; and no. I (p. 46, n. 3).

¹² On the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 282–99; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 214–16; Tolotti, 'Ricerca dei luoghi venerati'; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 187–92; Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*; eadem, 'Praetextati coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 250–61; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–8; and no. I (p. 46, n. 7).

¹³ On the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuense, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 79–86; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 190–1; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 227–9; M. Ricciardi, 'Pontiani coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* IV, pp. 213–19; and no. VI (p. 182, n. 7).

¹⁴ The *ballistaria* was a fortress situated so as to guard the river Tiber, at a place now known as the *Mezzo camino*; Testini (*Archeologia cristiana*, p. 19, n. 2) points out that the cemetery of Cyriacus was discovered there in 1915. See no. XX (p. 396, n. 24).

¹⁵ On the crypt which was carved out of the tufa around the tomb of St Laurence, so as to form what is called a *nicchia quadrata*, and which probably dates from the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 338–54; Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte* I, pp. 173–82; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 240–1; and more recently S. Serra, 'La tomba di S. Lorenzo: una messa a punto', in *Atti del IX Congresso nazionale di archeologia cristiana* (Agrigento, 20–5 novembre 2004), 2 vols. (Palermo, 2007), I, pp. 357–73.

¹⁶ On the cemetery of St Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 356–71; Bovini, *Sant'Ippolito dottore*, pp. 123–78; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 242–3; Bertonière, *The Cult Center*, esp. pp. 99–100; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 153–7; D. Nuzzo, 'S. Hippolyti coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 68–75; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 98–102; and no. VI (p. 186, n. 29).

¹⁷ The reference here is to the martyred Pope Pontianus (230–5), not to the martyr Pontianus buried near the Via Aurelia [XXIX.11].

¹⁸ On the burial place of St Timothy, martyred (perhaps) during the 'Great Persecution', see (briefly) Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 197. No *passio* devoted to St Timothy appears to have been composed; but he is commemorated against 22 August in the early sacramentaries.

¹⁹ On the cemetery of Bassilla (later called the 'cemetery of Hermes'), see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 568–81; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 261–3; Pergola and Barbini,

September

[5 September] Acontius, in Porto; and Nonnus and Herculanius and Taurinus.

[9 September] Gorgonius, on the Via Labicana.²⁰

[11 September] Protus and Hyacinthus, in the cemetery of Bassilla [cf. IX.19].

[14 September] Cyprian, in Africa; at Rome he is commemorated in the cemetery of Callistus.

[22 September] Bassilla, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in the ninth consulship of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian [= AD 304] [cf. IX.19].

October

[14 October] Callistus, on the Via Aurelia, at the third mile [XII.9].²¹

November

[9 November] Clement, Sempronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, *in comitatum* [cf. XXIV.22].²²

[29 November] Saturninus, in the cemetery of Thrason [XX.4].²³

December

[13 December] Ariston, in Porto.

Depositio Episcoporum

[27 December] Pope Dionysius (260–7), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[30 December] Pope Felix I (268–73), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[31 December] Pope Silvester (314–35), in the cemetery of Priscilla.

[10 January] Pope Miltiades (310–14), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[15 January] Pope Marcellinus (295–303), in the cemetery of Priscilla.

[5 March] Pope Lucius (253–4), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[22 April] Pope Gaius (282–95), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[4 August] Pope Stephen I (254–7), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[26 September] Pope Eusebius (308), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[8 December] Pope Eutychianus (274–82), in the cemetery of Callistus.

[7 October] Pope Marcus (336), in the cemetery of Balbina.

[12 April] Pope Julius (337–52), in the cemetery of Calepodius, at the church of St Callistus, on the Via Aurelia.

Le catacombe romane, pp. 115–18; L. Spera, 'Bassillae coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* I, pp. 211–14; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 21–32; and no. IX (p. 230, n. 9).

²⁰ It is possible that St Gorgonius was buried somewhere in the cemetery *inter duas lauros*, also known as the cemetery of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, on the Via Labicana; see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 238.

²¹ On the cemetery of Calepodius (also called the cemetery of Callistus), at the third mile of the Via Aurelia, see Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 188–9, but esp. Nestori, 'La catacomba di Calepodio', and *idem*, 'Ultimi lavori a Calepodio', *RACr* 61 (1985), 237–53; and see also the more recent assessments of Nestori's discovery by Verrando, 'Analisi topografica degli antichi cimiteri', and *idem*, 'Cal(l)isti coemeterium (via Aurelia)', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 44–50; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 237–9; and no. XII (p. 289, nn. 5–7).

²² No cemetery named *in comitatum* is known in Rome; but see J. Guyon, 'Comitatum', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 133–4, and *idem*, 'Les Quatre Couronnés', pp. 494–5; cf. also *idem*, 'Duas Lauros (inter, ad), territorium', *LTUR. Suburbium* II, pp. 215–18.

²³ On the cemetery of Thrason (also called 'ad S. Saturninum') on the Via Salaria Nuova, see Marucchi, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 439–53; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, p. 251; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 123–4; D. De Francesco, 'Trasonis coemeterium', *LTUR. Suburbium* V, pp. 183–4, with fig. 130; Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 48–55; and no. XX (p. 394, n. 17).

APPENDIX II

The *Epigrammata* of Damasus

Pope Damasus (366–84) was one of the principal promoters of the cult of martyrs in Rome.¹ He embellished the burial places of martyrs by providing inscriptions (*tituli*) consisting of brief epigrams composed by himself,² and mounted these inscriptions, beautifully engraved in square capital lettering by the famous engraver Furius Dionysius Filocalus, on marble tablets at the martyrs' tombs.³ (Filocalus is also known as the compiler of the *Chronograph of 354*, which preserves inter alia the *Depositio martyrum*, translated in Appendix I.) None of the inscriptions has survived intact and *in situ*, but many have been preserved as substantial fragments, others as tiny fragments consisting merely of a few letters, either near the site of the martyrs' original tombs in suburban cemeteries, or in intramural churches, where they were moved for safety and preservation at times when Rome was invaded by barbarians; some ended up in Vatican collections, and others in the pavements of Roman churches, such as S. Giovanni in Laterano. In many cases it is possible to see how the fragments relate to the original inscription, because the texts of the epigrams were copied by pilgrims to Rome when the inscriptions were still to be seen *in situ*, and these pilgrims' copies are preserved in medieval collections of *tituli* called *syllogae* (see following paragraph).⁴ The genuine *epigrammata* of Damasus, composed before 384, are therefore a primary witness to the cult of martyrs in Rome; furthermore, because many of them were probably still to be seen *in situ* in suburban cemeteries during the period 425–675, they were a valuable source of information for the authors of *passiones* of Roman martyrs.

¹ The essential studies of the *epigrammata* of Damasus as a source for the martyrs of Rome are: *DACL* IV/1 [1920], cols. 145–97 [H. Leclercq]; Schaefer, 'Die Bedeutung der Epigramme'; Piétri, *Roma Christiana*, I, pp. 529–46; *Saecularia Damasiana*; Guyon, 'Damase et l'illustration des martyrs'; and Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, pp. 148–55.

² The epigrams of Damasus are superbly edited, with illustration of the surviving fragments, by Antonio Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*. A selection of these *tituli*, well illustrated with photographs of the lapidary remains, and provided with Italian translation, is Ferrua and Carletti, *Damaso e i martiri di Roma*. More recently, Dennis Trout has provided an edition, based on that of Ferrua, of all the *epigrammata* edited by Ferrua, plus a small number of fragments which have come to light since Ferrua's edition was published in 1942, together with accurate English translations and excellent commentary: *Damasus of Rome: The Epigraphic Poetry*. In what follows I quote my own translations of Damasus, for the simple reason that I had made them many years before the appearance of Trout's edition; but I have compared his translations with my own, often to my profit.

³ On the engraving of Filocalus, see A. Ferrua, 'Filocalo l'amante della bella lettera', *La civiltà cattolica* 90 (1939), 35–47; Salzman, *On Roman Time*, pp. 199–202; *EEC* II, p. 682 [U. Dionisi]; and esp. Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 47–52 with figs. 1–4.

⁴ The principal *syllogae* were ed. by de Rossi, *ICUR* II, pp. 1–464; they are helpfully discussed by Barker, *Rome of the Pilgrims and Martyrs*, pp. 240–96. A modern edition of these *syllogae*, with translation and commentary, is a great desideratum.

As far as the texts of *epigrammata* by Damasus are concerned, five *syllogae* are in question:

C (Centulensis): a collection of *tituli* compiled at Saint-Riquier, but transmitted in a manuscript written at Corbie c.800, now preserved in St Petersburg, Russian National Library, F. v. XIV. 1.⁵

E (Einsiedlensis): a collection of *tituli* compiled and probably written at Einsiedeln, now preserved in Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, 326 (written at Einsiedeln by a scribe trained at Fulda, s. ix^{2/3}).⁶

L (Laureshamensis Quarta): a large and important collection of *tituli* compiled and written at Lorsch at the beginning of the ninth century, now preserved in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 833, fols. 26–84 (Lorsch, s. ix¹).⁷

T (Turonensis): a collection of *tituli* compiled at Tours, perhaps as early as the seventh century, but preserved only in two much later twelfth-century manuscripts written at the Austrian monasteries of Klosterneuburg and Göttweig respectively.⁸

V (Virdunensis): a collection of *tituli* compiled and written at Verdun in the tenth century, now preserved as Verdun, Bibliothèque municipale, 45 (s. x).⁹

These five *syllogae* are preserved in manuscripts of the ninth century and later; however, it can be deduced from the *tituli* of churches and martyrs which they contain that they derive from records compiled in the seventh century: at the same time, that is, as the pilgrim itineraries which are translated and discussed in Appendix IV (pp. 659–66) were being compiled.

In his great edition of the *epigrammata*, Ferrua arranged the poems by the locations in which fragments of the inscriptions were found, beginning with the Vatican, then proceeding counterclockwise to the various suburban cemeteries on the principal roads leading out of Rome—Via Portuense, Via Ostiense, Via Ardeatina, Via Appia, Via Labicana, Via Tiburtina, Via Nomentana, Via Salaria Nuova, Via Salaria Vecchia, and Via Flaminia.¹⁰ I follow the sequence in which the epigrams are printed by Ferrua; note, however, that I translate only epigrams which pertain to martyrs who are commemorated in the *passiones* translated in the present volume.

⁵ On the manuscript, see Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, II, no. 2317. The Saint-Riquier collection (*Centulensis*) is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR*, II, pp. 72–94.

⁶ On the manuscript, see G. Walser, *Die Einsiedler Inschriftensammlung und der Pilgerführer durch Rom (Codex Einsidlensis 326)* (Stuttgart, 1987); and, for the dating, Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, I, no. 1133. The Einsiedeln collection (*Einsidlensis*) is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR*, II, pp. 18–35.

⁷ On the manuscript, see Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, III, no. 6559. The so-called Fourth Lorsch sylloge (*Laureshamensis Quarta*) is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR*, II, pp. 95–118.

⁸ Klosterneuburg, Stiftsbibliothek, 723 (s. xii), and Göttweig, Stiftsbibliothek, 64 (78) (s. xii). In the opinion of de Rossi, the Göttweig manuscript was copied from the Klosterneuburg manuscript, and therefore its readings are not recorded in his *app.crit.* The sylloge from Tours (*Turonensis*) is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR*, II, pp. 62–71.

⁹ The Verdun collection (*Virdunensis*) is ed. de Rossi, *ICUR*, II, pp. 134–41.

¹⁰ As an appendix Ferrua printed a number of epigrams which are in the style of Damasus, but which were evidently composed later than the fourth century: *Epigrammata Damasiana*, pp. 219–59.

(a) SS. Faustinus and Beatrix

A tiny fragment of an inscription, in Filocalian lettering, consisting of two martyrs' names, was found in the cemetery of Generosa on the Via Portuense:¹¹ *Faustino Viatrici*... 'to Faustinus, to Beatrix'.¹²

Ed. Ferrua, no. 6 (pp. 97–8); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 90–1. The inscription probably, but not certainly, relates to the martyrs named Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix, whose *passio* is no. XXXVI (pp. 598–602).¹³

(b) SS. Felix and Adauctus

A tiny fragment in Filocalian lettering, consisting of a few words of a *titulus*. The fragments were first recognized as such by Marc'Antonio Boldetti in 1720 in the Vatican collection, to which they had been removed at some indeterminable time from the cemetery of Commodilla (just off the Via Ostiense), where the martyrs were buried and commemorated in a hypogean basilica, where the site of their tomb may still be visited. The epigram is preserved in four of the five *syllogae* listed above (those of Einsiedeln, Tours, Saint-Riquier, and Lorsch),¹⁴ and it was knowledge of these *syllogae*, especially that in the Vatican library (*Laureshamensis quarta*), which enabled Boldetti to identify the Vatican lapidary fragments.

Ed. Ferrua, no. 7 (pp. 98–100); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 94–6; listed ICL 11047 (inc. 'O semel atque iterum vero de nomine Felix'); SS. Felix and Adauctus are commemorated in the *passio* no. XXXV (pp. 593–7).

O, once and again 'blessed' in your true name [Felix]
 who, having scorned the emperor of the world with inviolate faith
 confessed Christ (and) sought the celestial realms!
 O, the truly precious faith of a brother—recognize this!—
 by which Adauctus likewise hastened to heaven as victor!
 At the command of Bishop Damasus, Verus the priest
 constructed for them this tomb, adorning the shrine of the saints.

(c) SS. Nereus and Achilleus

Two fragments of an inscription are preserved, now mounted in the wall of the hypogean basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus in the cemetery of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina. The complete *titulus* is preserved in three of the aforementioned *syllogae* (those of Einsiedeln, Tours, and Lorsch).¹⁵

¹¹ On the cemetery of Generosa, see de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea* III, pp. 647–97; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 191–2; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 154–8; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 230–2; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 239–42.

¹² The spelling *Viatrici* (for *Beatrici*) represents the Vulgar Latin pronunciation of the stonemason who engraved the inscription; see p. 600, n. 12.

¹³ For discussion, see the appendix to the article by P. Pergola, 'Nereus et Achilleus martyres', pp. 218–24.

¹⁴ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Einsidlensis*, p. 32 [no. 76]; *Sylloge Turonensis*, pp. 67–8 [no. 24]; *Sylloge Centulensis*, p. 82 [no. 20]; and *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, pp. 102–3 [no. 32].

¹⁵ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Einsidlensis*, p. 31 [no. 74]; *Sylloge Turonensis*, p. 67 [no. 28]; and *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, p. 101 [no. 20].

Ed. Ferrua, no. 8 (pp. 101–5); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 2 (pp. 13–16); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 98–100; listed *ICL* 9641 (inc. ‘Militiae nomen dederant saevumque gerebant’); the *passio* of SS. Nereus and Achilleus is no. VIII (pp. 201–27).

They had enrolled in the military, and they performed
this savage duty, observing together the commands of the tyrant,
ready to serve his orders with trembling fear.

Marvellous is the turn of events: they suddenly abandoned this madness;
after converting they flee, they leave the wicked encampments,
they cast away their shields, decorations, and bloody weapons:
having confessed, they rejoice to bear the victories of Christ.
Believe through Damasus what the glory of Christ can achieve!

(d) St Tarsicius

The martyrdom of St Tarsicius, who was apparently a member of the congregation of Pope Stephen, is described in the *passio* of Pope Stephen, according to which he was buried—as was Pope Stephen himself (see following epigram, no. (e))—in the cemetery of Callistus (XXVI.22). No fragment of the *titulus* has ever been found, but it happens to be preserved in the fourth *sylloge* of Lorsch (*Laureshamensis quarta*).¹⁶

Ed. Ferrua, no. 15 (pp. 117–19); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 3 (pp. 17–18); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 111–13; listed *ICL* 11601 (inc. ‘Par meritum quicumque legis cognosce duorum’). St Tarsicius is commemorated in the *passio* no. XXVI (pp. 477–93).

Whoever (you are who) reads this: recognize the equal merit of two (saints),
for whom Damasus produced inscriptions following their martyrdoms.
The Jewish populace had struck down Stephen with stones,
as he was preaching better things—he who had taken the trophy
from the enemy;

he, the faithful levite [deacon], was the first to undergo martyrdom.

When an evil band was oppressing with its wickedness

St Tarsicius, as he was carrying the sacraments of Christ,

he wished, when attacked, to give up his own life

rather than to surrender the celestial body [of Christ] to the rabid dogs.¹⁷

(e) The Martyred Popes and the Companions of Pope Sixtus

The 126 fragments of an inscription, in excellent Filocalian lettering, were found in the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia), now reassembled and mounted on the wall of this important shrine,¹⁸ which housed the remains of the following

¹⁶ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, p. 109 [no. 62].

¹⁷ That is to say, Tarsicius was apprehended as he was carrying the *fermentum* (bread = the body of Christ as consecrated by the pope) to a station church, so that mass could be celebrated there in communion with the pope, but in his absence.

¹⁸ The entire vol. II of de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, is devoted to the cemetery of Callistus; see also Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 77–93; Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 210–12; Carletti, *Le antiche chiese dei martiri romani*, pp. 103–13; Baruffa, *The Catacombs of St Callixtus*; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 195–203; Fiocchi Nicolai and Guyon, ‘Relire Styger’; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 143–72.

popes: Pontianus (230–5), Anteros (235–6), Fabian (236–50), Lucius (253–4), Stephen I (254–7), Sixtus II (257–8), Dionysius (260–7), Felix I (268–73), and Eutychianus (274–82). The complete *titulus* is preserved in two *syllogae*, those of Tours and Lorsch.¹⁹

Ed. Ferrua, no. 16 (pp. 119–23); ed. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 4 (pp. 19–23); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 113–15; listed ICL 6312 (inc. ‘Hic congesta iacet quaeris si turba piorum’). Of the popes in question, two are commemorated in *passiones* translated here: Pope Sixtus II in nos. VI and XVI (pp. 180–94, 316–47) and Pope Stephen I in no. XXVI (pp. 477–93). The ‘companions’ of Pope Sixtus are the four deacons who were executed with him on 6 August 258 (from the *Liber pontificalis* we know their names to have been Ianuarius, Magnus, Vincent, and Stephen: see p. 183). (SS. Felicissimus and Agapitus (on whom see no. (i)) were also deacons of Pope Sixtus II, but they were martyred separately from him, and were buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus.)

Here, brought together, lies a number of holy men, if you should ask:
the venerable tombs preserve the bodies of the saints;
the kingdom of heaven took to itself their sublime souls.
Here are the companions of Pope Sixtus who bear away trophies
from the Enemy;
here is the number of elders who preserve the altars of Christ.
Here is buried a bishop who lived a long time in peace.
Here are the holy confessors whom Greece sent to us.
Here there are young men, boys, old men, and their chaste offspring,
who found it pleasing to preserve their virginal modesty.
Here I, Damasus, wished to bury my own remains, I confess,
but I feared to disturb the holy remains of the faithful.

(f) Pope Sixtus II

Two tiny fragments in Filocalian lettering from the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia; the complete *titulus* is preserved uniquely in the fourth *sylloge* of Lorsch (*Laureshamensis quarta*).²⁰

Ed. Ferrua, no. 17 (pp. 123–6); ed. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 5 (pp. 24–5); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 116–17; listed ICL 16193 (‘inc. ‘Tempore quo gladius secuit pia viscera matris / hic positus rector’). Pope Sixtus II is commemorated in *passiones* nos. VI (pp. 180–94) and XVI (pp. 316–47).

At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
the bishop buried here was teaching heavenly doctrine.
Suddenly men come who carry him away from his see;
the people then submitted their necks to the soldiers (who were) sent.
But as soon as the elder, who wished to receive the palm, realized (this)
he offered himself and his head first of all,
so that the impatient savagery (of the soldiers) would not harm the others.
Christ, Who grants the rewards of (eternal) life, revealed
the merit of this shepherd: He Himself protects the numbers of His flock.

¹⁹ ICUR II: *Sylloge Turonensis*, p. 66 [no. 23]; *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, p. 105 [no. 43].

²⁰ ICUR II: *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, p. 108 [no. 60].

(g) Pope Cornelius

A fragment of an inscription in excellent Filocalian lettering was found lying on the ground by Giovanni Battista de Rossi in 1849; subsequent excavation at the site in 1852 led to the discovery of the tomb of Pope Cornelius near the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia.²¹ In this case, unfortunately, the *titulus* is not preserved in any later *sylloge*, so it is impossible to reconstruct the original with certainty; however, enough of the wording survives to have enabled de Rossi to make a conjectural reconstruction, which is translated here.

De Rossi, *Roma sotterranea* I, p. 291; cf. Ferrua, no. 19 (pp. 136–7), and Trout, pp. 119–20. The *passio* of Pope Cornelius is no. VII (pp. 195–200).

Look: you can see the monument of Cornelius and his sacred tomb,
now that a staircase has been constructed and the darkness expelled.
The insistence of Damasus, though ill, carried out this work
so that access (to the tomb) would be better, and the saint's assistance would be
made available to the crowds; and, if you are able to pour out prayers
with a pure heart, Damasus may get up having recovered—it was not
the love of light but rather the concern for this work which detained him.²²

(h) St Ianuarius

Some fragments of a marble inscription were found in a crypt of the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia)²³ between 1863 and 1872. The inscription is in Filocalian lettering, but not in verse; it reads: 'To the blessed martyr Ianuarius Bishop Damasus composed (this inscription)'. In the opinion of Ferrua, the inscription relates to one of the seven sons of St Felicitas, who, according to the *Depositio martyrum*, was buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus (Appendix I, p. 635).

Ed. Ferrua, no. 24 (pp. 151–2); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 9 (pp. 35–6); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 125–6. The *passio* of St Felicitas and her seven sons is no. I (pp. 45–53).

(i) SS. Felicissimus and Agapitus

Felicissimus and Agapitus were two deacons who were martyred at the same time as Pope Sixtus II, and who are commemorated alongside the pope in the *passio* of St Polychronius (XVI.17–18). They were buried in the cemetery of Praetextatus (Via Appia). Three fragments of a tablet containing the Damasan epigram were identified in 1927 by Enrico Josi in the pavement of the Roman church of S. Nicola; sufficient text

²¹ De Rossi, *Roma sotterranea* I, pp. 277–96; the fragment found by de Rossi is illustrated in pl. IV. See also Styger, *Märtyrergrüfte*, I, pp. 97–108, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 158–72.

²² De Rossi's reconstruction is as follows (italics indicate words which can be read on the marble fragment; the remainder is his reconstruction): 'Aspice, descensu extructo *tenebrisque fugatis*/Corneli monumenta vides *tumulumque sacratum*./Hoc opus aegroti *Damasi praestantia fecit*./Esset ut accessus *melior*, *populisque paratum*/Auxilium sancti, *et valeas si fundere puro*/Corde preces, Damasus *melior consurgere posset*./Quem non lucis amor, *tenuit mage cura laboris*' (*Roma sotterranea* I, p. 291; cf. Trout, *Damasus of Rome*, pp. 119–20).

²³ See Testini, *Archeologia cristiana*, pp. 214–16, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 177–84.

is preserved on the tablets to enable identification with a *titulus* preserved in the *sylloge* of Tours (*Turonensis*).²⁴

Ed. Ferrua, no. 25 (pp. 152–6); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 10 (pp. 37–8); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 126–8; listed *ICL* 1127 (inc. ‘*Aspice et hic tumulus*’). The martyrdoms of Felicissimus and Agapitus are commemorated in the *passio* of SS. Polychronius and others, no. XVI (pp. 316–47).

Please note: this tomb, too, contains the heavenly bodies
of saints, whom the palace of heaven suddenly carried off.
They were companions of the unconquerable Cross, and likewise attendants
of the holy bishop; having followed his example and his faith
they sought the aetherial dwellings and realms of the holy.
The unique glory of the Roman populace rejoices in them,
because, with Sixtus as their leader, they were worthy to achieve the
triumph of Christ.
POPE DAMASUS, FOR FELICISSIMUS AND AGAPITUS.

(j) St Cyrinus (?), St Maximus (?)

Fragments of an inscription in Filocalian lettering were found at various times between 1872 and 1927 at various places in the cemetery of Praetextatus, on the Via Appia. Although no more than a few words of the inscription can be read, the location of the fragments suggests that the inscription pertained to one of the martyrs buried in the ‘*Spelunca magna*’ of Praetextatus. Enrico Josi suggested that the martyr in question was St Cyrinus, whose tomb in the ‘*Spelunca magna*’ is described in the *Notitia ecclesiarum* (Appendix IV (a) [§8], p. 661), and whose martyrdom is described in the *passio* of SS. Alexander, Eventius and Theodulus (XXXII.14): see ‘*Le iscrizioni damasiane*’, pp. 225–34. More recently, Lucrezia Spera has suggested that the inscription might pertain to St Maximus,²⁵ the *cornicularius* who in the *passio* of St Caecilia was said to have been converted by Valerian and Tiburtius, and was buried alongside them in the cemetery of Praetextatus (IV.24).

Ed. Ferrua, no. 27 (pp. 157–9); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 128–9.

(k) SS. Marcellinus and Peter

A tiny fragment of a *titulus* in Filocalian lettering was found in 1896 in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* (Via Labicana) by Enrico Stevenson, who was able to match the few surviving letters with the wording of a Damasan epigram which is preserved uniquely in c. 13 of the *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter (it is not preserved in any medieval *sylloge*).

Ed. Ferrua, no. 28 (pp. 160–2); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 132–4; listed *ICL* 9277 (inc. ‘*Marcelline tuum pariter Petrique sepulchrum*’).²⁶ The *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Petrus is no. XXIII (pp. 436–47).

²⁴ See Josi, ‘*Le iscrizioni damasiane*’, pp. 234–9. *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Turonensis*, p. 66 [no. 22]. For the church of S. Nicola dei Cesarini (S. Nicolai de calcarariis), see Huelsen, *Le chiese*, p. 391.

²⁵ Spera, *Il complesso di Pretestato sulla Via Appia*, pp. 304–6.

²⁶ See Guyon, ‘*L’oeuvre de Damase*’, pp. 228–38, with figs. 1–7.

O Marcellinus, and likewise Peter, (the story of) your burial
 the executioner told to me, Damasus, when I was a boy—that a
 crazed butcher had given him these orders,
 that he was to cut off your heads in the midst of a brier-patch
 so that no one could identify your graves;
 that you happily dug your graves with your own hands,
 that you afterwards had lain stainlessly hidden in the tomb.
 Thereafter Lucilla, alerted (in a vision) by your devout intervention,
 was pleased to bury your holy remains here instead.

(l) St Tiburtius

St Tiburtius is described in the *passio* of St Sebastian as a son of the urban prefect who was converted to Christianity and baptized, and subsequently executed and buried at the third mile of the Via Labicana (III.82), that is to say, at the cemetery *inter duas lauros*; his burial there is recorded in all three seventh-century pilgrim itineraries (Appendix IV), as well as in the *passio* of SS. Marcellinus and Peter (XXIII.12). A five-line epigram commemorating his martyrdom is preserved in two medieval *syllogae*: those of Saint-Riquier (*Centulensis*) and Tours (*Turonensis*).²⁷ Recently a tiny fragment bearing the letters UR was found in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* by Jean Guyon, who suggested that the fragment might preserve part of the name TIBURTIUS from the last line of the epigram.²⁸

Ed. Ferrua, no. 31 (pp. 164–5); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 135–6; listed *ICL* 16192 (inc. ‘Tempore quo gladius secuit pia viscera matris / egregius martyr’). St Tiburtius is one of the martyrs commemorated in the *passio* of St Sebastian, no. III (pp. 88–137).

At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
 the outstanding martyr, having scorned the emperor of the world,
 blessedly seeks the upper reaches of the sky with Christ as his companion.
 Holy distinction and praise will always remain here for you;
 I ask, O (martyr) dear to God, kindly Tiburtius, that you favour Damasus.

(m) St Laurence

An epigram of Damasus, of which no marble fragment has ever been found, is preserved in two *syllogae*, those of Saint-Riquier (*Centulensis*) and Lorsch (*Laureshamensis quarta*).²⁹ From the position of the epigram in the *syllogae*, Ferrua deduced that it must pertain to the basilica of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina. Unlike most other Damasan epigrams, this one is composed in elegiac couplets.

Ed. Ferrua, no. 33 (pp. 166–7); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 141–3; listed *ICL* 17091 (inc. ‘Verbera carnifices flammas tormenta catenas’). St Laurence is commemorated in two *passiones*, nos. VI (pp. 180–94) and XVI (pp. 316–47).

²⁷ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Centulensis*, p. 90 [no. 48]; *Sylloge Turonensis*, p. 64 [no. 12].

²⁸ ‘L’oeuvre de Damase’, pp. 238–44.

²⁹ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Centulensis*, p. 82 [no. 22]; *Sylloge Laureshamensis Quarta*, pp. 117–18 [no. 100]. The version of the *titulus* in these two *syllogae* consists solely of the first four lines (two elegiac couplets) of the poem as printed by Ferrua; I have therefore omitted the final two lines printed by Ferrua.

Beatings, torturers, flames, torments, chains— the faith of Laurence
alone could overcome (all these).

The humble Damasus heaps these altars with gifts,
on seeing the merit of the outstanding martyr.

(n) St Hippolytus

A number of fragments of an inscription survive as part of the medieval pavement of S. Giovanni in Laterano, whence they had been taken when the original inscription was broken up, probably c.1425; the inscription was originally found in the cemetery of Hippolytus on the Via Tiburtina. The *titulus* is preserved uniquely in the sylloge of Saint-Riquier (*Centulensis*).³⁰

Ed. Ferrua, no. 35 (pp. 169–72); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 144–7; listed *ICL* 6852 (inc. 'Hippolytus fertur premerent cum iussa tyranni'). St Hippolytus is commemorated in the *passiones* nos. VI (pp. 180–94) and XVI (pp. 316–47).

When the tyrant's commands were pressing, Hippolytus
the priest³¹ is said always to have remained with Novatus in schism.
At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
when, devoted to Christ, he sought the realms of the holy,
the people sought some place where they could retreat
so that everyone could be said to follow the catholic faith.
Thus our saint, having confessed, was found worthy to be a martyr.
Damasus reports what he heard; Christ examines all things.

(o) St Agnes

In 1728 the marble tablet, in Filocalian lettering, broken into two parts, was found embedded in the pavement of the basilica of S. Agnese on the Via Nomentana. When restored, the tablet was found to preserve intact a Damasan *titulus* (which is fortunate, since the epigram is not preserved in any medieval *sylloge*). It was probably composed to celebrate the dedication of the basilica of St Agnes, constructed on imperial property by Constantina, daughter of the emperor Constantine, between 337 and 351.

Ed. Ferrua, no. 37 (pp. 175–8); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 11 (pp. 39–42); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 150–1; listed *ICL* 4939 (inc. 'Fama refert sanctos dudum retulisse parentes'). St Agnes is commemorated in the *passio* translated as no. XVII (pp. 348–62).

The story relates that her holy parents once said that
Agnes, when the trumpet had sounded a mournful note,³²
had suddenly left the bosom of her nurse

³⁰ *ICUR* II: *Sylloge Centulensis*, p. 82 [no. 21]; see also de Rossi, 'Elogio Damasiano', p. 26, with pls. I–II.

³¹ Hippolytus is said to be a priest (*presbyter*) here because, at the time of his exile, he was a priest, though he later claimed the papacy; see the 'Liberian Catalogue' in the 'Chronographer of 354', s.a. 235: 'eo tempore Pontianus episcopus et Yppolitus presbyter exoles sunt deportati in Sardinia' (*MGH*, *AA* IX, pp. 74–5; trans. Davis, p. 99).

³² The trumpet used by the *praecones* when announcing an imperial edict.

(and) willingly had trampled underfoot the threats and rage of the savage tyrant—because she wished for her noble body to burn in the flames, (thus) to overcome mighty fear with her modest strength and to cover her naked body with her flowing hair so that the gaze of mortals could not see the temple of God.³³ O venerable saint, (who represent) for me the sacred glory of chastity: I ask, great martyr, that you look favourably on the prayers of Damasus.

(p) SS. Felix and Philip

According to the *passio* of St Felicitas (no. I), Felix and Philip were two of the seven sons of St Felicitas. No fragment of the marble inscription has ever been found. According to the *Depositio martyrum* of 354, the remains of these two saints were buried in the cemetery of Priscilla (Appendix I, p. 634). The *titulus* is preserved in the early medieval *sylogae* of Tours (*Turonensis*) and Verdun (*Viridunensis*);³⁴ the authorship of Damasus is assured by the final line of the poem.

Ed. Ferrua, no. 39 (pp. 179–81); ed. and trans. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 12 (pp. 43–4); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 155–7; listed *ICL* 13313 (inc. ‘Qui natum passumque Deum repetisse paternas’). SS. Felix and Philip are commemorated in the *passio* of St Felicitas translated as no. I (pp. 45–53); but note that the epigram does not mention that Felix and Philip were brothers, nor that they were sons of St Felicitas.

He who believes that God suffered death (on the Cross) and sought again His paternal home, thence to come again from on high, that on His return He may judge the living and likewise the dead: that the kingdom of heaven may lie open to holy martyrs—he will look within (his heart), if he is to get the rewards of Christ. Felix as well as Philip were worshippers of the Lord, equal in virtue; having scorned the emperor of the world they sought their eternal home and the realm of the holy, because with their own blood they deserved the crowns of Christ. Damasus in supplication wished to offer his prayers to them.

(q) Pope Marcellus

It can be deduced from the *sylloge* of Verdun that the *titulus* of Pope Marcellus was formerly to be found in the hypogean basilica of St Silvester in the cemetery of Priscilla.³⁵ No fragment of the inscription has ever been found, but the authorship of Damasus is assured by the final two lines.

Ed. Ferrua, no. 40 (p. 181); ed. Ferrua and Carletti, no. 13 (pp. 45–6); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 157–9; listed *ICL* 17119 (inc. ‘Veridicus rector lapsos quia crimina flere’). Pope Marcellus is commemorated in the *passio* translated as no. XX (pp. 390–410).

³³ The *templum Dei* is the body of St Agnes.

³⁴ *ICUR* II: *Sylogae Turonensis*, p. 62 [nos. 2 + 3]; *Sylogae Viridunensis*, p. 138 [nos. 23 + 24].

³⁵ *ICUR* II: *Sylogae Turonensis*, p. 62 [no. 4]; *Sylogae Viridunensis*, p. 138 [no. 22].

Because the truthful bishop required that the lapsed bewail their sins,
 he was (regarded) as the bitter enemy of all poor wretches.
 Hence anger, hence hatred, discord, quarrels,
 mutiny, slaughter, accompany him: the bonds of peace are dissolved.
 Because of another's sin [i.e. accusation], who denied Christ in peacetime,
 he was driven from his homeland by the ferocity of a tyrant.³⁶
 Damasus wished briefly to record these details (which he) discovered,
 so that the populace can recognize the merit of Marcellus.

(r) The Sixty-two Martyrs

At the end of the *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria, who were buried in the cemetery of Thrason on the Via Salaria Nuova, a large number of Christian worshippers were buried alive on the emperor's orders (X.27). The *passio* does not specify the number of Christians who were martyred in this way; but in the seventh-century pilgrim itinerary *De locis sanctis martyrum*, it is stated that 'in another church are SS. Chrysanthus and Daria the virgin with sixty-two other martyrs' (Appendix IV (b) [§11], p. 664), and these are the unnamed martyrs who are commemorated by the present epigram. No fragment of the epigram has ever been found, but its text is preserved in the medieval *sylogae* of Saint-Riquier (*Centulensis*) and Verdun (*Viridunensis*).³⁷

Ed. Ferrua, no. 43 (pp. 184–6); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 163–4; listed *ICL* 16194. The 'sixty-two martyrs' are commemorated in the *passio* no. X (pp. 250–69).

At the time when the sword was slicing into the inwards of Mother (Church),
 sixty-two persons, seized by the savagery of the tyrant,
 offered at once their necks to the soldiers sent (to execute them);
 having confessed Christ and having conquered the emperor of the world,
 they sought the heavenly home and the realms of the holy.

(s) St Maurus

According to the *passio* of SS. Chrysanthus and Daria, Maurus was one of the sons of Hilaria, who was converted, together with his mother, by the preaching of St Chrysanthus, and was duly executed and buried in the cemetery of Thrason, on the Via Salaria Nuova. The brief epigram of Damasus is known solely from medieval *sylogae*, including those of Saint-Riquier (*Centulensis*), Verdun (*Viridunensis*), and the fourth *sylloge* of Lorsch (*Laureshamensis quarta*).³⁸

Ed. Ferrua, no. 44 (p. 186); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 164–5; listed *ICL* 9400 ('Martyris hic Mauri tumulus pia membra retentat').³⁹ St Maurus is commemorated, together with his brother, Jason, in the *passio* no. X (pp. 250–69).

³⁶ Given the date of Marcellus' pontificate (c. 309–10), the 'tyrant' in question must be the emperor Maxentius.

³⁷ *ICUR* II: *Sylogae Centulensis*, pp. 84 [no. 27] and 87 [no. 31b]; *Sylogae Laureshamensis quarta*, p. 101 [no. 21]; and *Sylogae Viridunensis*, p. 136 [no. 10].

³⁸ *ICUR* II: *Sylogae Centulensis*, pp. 84 [no. 28], 87 [no. 31c]; *Sylogae Laureshamensis Quarta*, p. 100 [no. 15]; *Sylogae Viridunensis*, p. 137 [no. 16].

³⁹ See discussion by Cipollone, 'Il santuario dei martiri Crisanto e Daria', p. 601.

This tomb preserves the remains of Maurus the martyr,
 which Damasus, bishop of the people, after a lengthy passage of time,
 dutifully adorned, decorating it with more fitting ornament;
 (he was) a guiltless boy, who was not overcome by torture of any kind.

(t) SS. Protus and Hyacinthus

We know from the *Depositio martyrum* of 354 that St Protus was buried in the cemetery of Bassilla, and a fragment of the grave-marker of St Hyacinthus was found in the same cemetery by Giuseppe Marchi in 1845 ('YACINTHVS MARTYR'). Damasus therefore adorned the shrine of these two martyrs by composing a *titulus*. Fragments of the inscription, in Filocalian lettering, are found in the pavement of the church of SS. Quattro Coronati; the *titulus* itself is preserved in two *sylogae*, those of Einsiedeln (*Einsidlensis*) and the fourth Lorsch *sylloge* (*Laureshamensis quarta*).⁴⁰

Ed. Ferrua, no. 47 (pp. 190–3); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 170–2; listed ICL 4892 (inc. 'Extremo tumulus latuit sub aggere montes'). SS. Protus and Hyacinthus are commemorated in the *passio* of SS. Eugenia, Protus, and Hyacinthus, no. IX (pp. 228–49).

Their tomb lay (hidden) beneath a great heap of earth.
 Damasus exposes it because it preserves the remains of the holy martyrs.
 The kingdom of heaven preserves you better, Protus;
 you, Hyacinthus, follow him, having been tested by your purple blood.
 (You are) both brothers, mighty in courage.
 This one deserved the palm, that one the crown.

(u) St Hermes

During excavations in the cemetery of Bassilla between 1932 and 1940, three tiny fragments of a *titulus*, in Filocalian lettering, were found, which are the remnants of a Damasan epigram otherwise preserved in the fourth *sylloge* of Lorsch (*sylloge Laureshamensis quarta*).⁴¹

Ed. Ferrua, no. 48 (pp. 195–6); ed. and trans. Trout, pp. 172–3; listed ICL 7485 (inc. 'Iam dudum quod fama refert'). St Hermes is one of the several martyrs commemorated in the *passio* of SS. Alexander, Eventius and Theodulus, no. XXXII (pp. 557–72).

Once upon a time, as report has it, Greece sent you:
 you exchanged your homeland with blood, and love of (Christ's) law
 made you a citizen and a brother: having suffered (martyrdom) for His name,
 you now serve the altars of Christ as the Lord's resident.
 I ask, great martyr, that you countenance the prayers of Damasus.

⁴⁰ ICUR II: *Sylloge Einsidlensis*, p. 30 [no. 72]; *Sylloge Laureshamensis quarta*, p. 104 [no. 41].

⁴¹ ICUR II: *Sylloge Laureshamensis quarta*, p. 108 [no. 57]; see E. Josi, 'Scoperta di due frammenti del carne damasiano in onore di S. Ermete', *RACr* 9 (1932), 147–50.

APPENDIX III

Roman Martyrs in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*

The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* [CPL 2031] is the oldest surviving Latin martyrology (that is, a work recording the day on which saints (singular or plural) were martyred, combined with an indication of where they were buried); the surviving examples are classified either as 'local' or 'universal' martyrologies.¹ The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* is a 'universal' martyrology which was compiled in northern Italy, probably at Aquileia, between the years 430 × 450. (In spite of the title by which it is commonly known, its association with Jerome is based on two spurious prefaces attached to the work in surviving manuscripts, which purport to be letters by Jerome to Chromatius of Aquileia and to Heliodorus of Altino.) It was based on three principal sources: the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 (cf. Appendix I, pp. 633–6); a Greek martyrology which was compiled at Nicomedia c.360 (drawn principally from Eusebius, *HE* and *The Martyrs of Palestine*), and which does not survive but is known from a Syriac translation made in the early fifth century; and the ancestor of the African martyrology of Carthage which in its present form dates from 505 × 535. No manuscript of this first, Aquileian, recension of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* survives. By the late sixth century, the original redaction had been transmitted to Auxerre, where in 592 large numbers of Gaulish saints were added.² The three principal surviving manuscripts (and the most important fragment) all represent this Gaulish redaction. In these circumstances it is simply impossible to determine the precise content of the original, Aquileian, redaction. The standard edition of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* is that by G. B. de Rossi and L. Duchesne, *Acta Sanctorum, Nouembris* II/1 (Brussels, 1894), pp. 1–195, which helpfully presents the three principal manuscripts (Echternach, Bern, and Wolfenbüttel)³ in parallel columns. But this standard edition must be read in conjunction with the indispensable commentary

¹ See *DACL* X/2, cols. 2523–2619 [H. Leclercq], with detailed discussion of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* at cols. 2530–63, and (briefly) J. Dubois and J.-L. Lemaître, *Sources et méthodes de l'hagiographie médiévale* (Paris, 1993), pp. 106–9 (with bibliography). For specifically Roman martyrs, see the valuable study by J. P. Kirsch, *Die stadtrömische christliche Festkalender*.

² See the important discussion by Louis Duchesne, 'A propos du Martyrologe Hiéronymien', *AB* 17 (1898), 421–47 (replying to a review of the de Rossi and Duchesne edition of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* in *Acta SS., Nouembris* II/1, by the bilious Bruno Krusch, in *Neues Archiv* 24 (1897), 289–337, who argued that the entire *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* was first compiled at Luxeuil in 627 or 628); Duchesne presents cogent arguments that the martyrology was known in some form by Cassiodorus and Gregory the Great, hence that it could not have been compiled in the mid seventh century, and must have been in existence in Italy no later than the late sixth century.

³ The manuscripts in question are: Echternach (Paris, BNF, lat. 10837 (Echternach, s. viii in.), Bern, Burgerbibliothek 289 (Metz, s. ix^{1/3}); and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Weissenburg 23 (Fontenelle, s. ix¹).

by [H. Quentin and] H. Delehay, *Commentarius perpetuus in Martyrologium Hieronymianum*.

From the thousands of entries in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* I have excerpted and translated all those which pertain to Roman martyrs (these entries are easily identified, because they begin explicitly with the word *Romae*, 'at Rome'), or martyrs from the environs of Rome (Ostia, Porto, Albano, etc.), as well as those of non-Roman martyrs who figure in the *passiones* translated in the present volume. I have based the translation not on the manuscript readings (as printed by de Rossi and Duchesne), but on the helpful conjectural reconstructions of the original entries in Delehay's *Commentarius perpetuus*. One of the features of the work which bedevils understanding is the very large number of what are obviously duplicated entries, which usually occur on adjacent dates and which make the business of determining a saint's day a matter of guesswork; I have reproduced all these duplicated entries and have not attempted to determine which is the original (students interested in this aspect of the problem can consult Delehay's wonderful *Commentarius*). Note that I translate *depositio* as 'burial', *natale* as 'death' (*natale* literally means 'birth into eternal life', hence 'day of death' or 'feast day'); *passio* as 'martyrdom'. In the context of Roman martyrs, *episcopus* usually, but not invariably, means 'pope'. For the popes whose burials are recorded in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, I supply the dates of their pontificates in parentheses.

December

- [25 December] Rome, Jovinus, Pastor, and Basileus [XXVI.14], Victoriana, Agel-leius. Rome, on the Via Latina, in the cemetery of Apronianus, the martyrdom of St Eugenia the virgin [IX.21]. At *Sirmium*, Anastasia, who followed the saints who were being led to martyrdom; she herself suffered a glorious martyrdom [II.36].
- [26 December] Rome, in the cemetery of Priscilla, the burial of Pope Dionysius (260–7).
- [29 December] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus, <Pope> Felix <I> (268–73). <Likewise at Rome>: the ordination of Pope Boniface (418–22).
- [30 December] <At Rome, Peter> Paul, Cletus. At Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the burial of Pope Felix <I> (268–73).
- [31 December] Rome, on the Via Salaria, in the cemetery of the Giordani, Donata, Paulina, Rogata, Dominanda, Serotina, Saturnina, Hilaria. <Likewise at Rome>, in the cemetery of Priscilla, the burial of St Silvester the pope (314–35). <At Rome, Peter>, Paul, Cletus, Stephen [XXVI.21], Pontianus, Anteros, Fabian, Cornelius [VII.3], Sixtus <II> [VI.4, XVI.18]. <Likewise at Rome>, Agnes [XVII.13].

January

- [1 January] Rome, on the Via Appia, at the thirtieth mile, <in the vicinity of> Cori, Narcissus, Argeus, <and Marcellinus>. <Likewise at Rome>, the death of Almachius who, at the command of Alypius the urban prefect, was killed by gladiators because he had said, 'Today, on the octave of Christmas Day, cease from the superstitious worship of idols and from polluted sacrifice.'
- [3 January] Rome, Pope Anteros (235–6).
- [6 January] At *Sirmium*, Anastasia [II.36].
- [9 January] Felicitas and seven others [I.5].
- [10 January] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the burial of Pope Miltiades (310–14).

- [12 January] <Rome>, on the Via Labicana, Zoticus, Castulus.
- [13 January] Rome, on the Via Labicana, Zoticus. Rome, at the second mile of the Via Labicana, the crowning of Forty <Martyrs>.
- [16 January] Rome, on the Via Salaria <Nuova>, in the cemetery of Priscilla, the burial of St Marcellus, bishop and confessor [XX.22]. <Likewise at Rome> on the Via Appia, in the cemetery of Callistus, <Pope> Fabian (236–50). <Likewise at Rome>, at the thirteenth mile of the Via Cornelia, the martyrdom of SS. Marius, Martha, Audifax, <and> Abacuc [XXII.19].
- [18 January] The *cathedra* ('bishop's stool') of St Peter in Rome. In Porto, Asterius [XXII.14]. At Rome, on the Via Salaria <Nuova>, <in the cemetery> of Priscilla, Prisca, virgin and martyr.
- [19 January] Rome, the martyrdom of St Sebastian [III.88–9].
- [20 January] Rome, on the Via Appia, in the cemetery of Callistus, Pope Fabian (236–50). <Likewise> at 'The Catacombs', Sebastian [III.88–9]. At the twelfth mile of the Via Cornelia, in their own cemetery, Marius, Martha, Audifax, and Abacuc [XXII.19].
- [21 January] Rome, on the Via Nomentana, the martyrdom of St Agnes the virgin [XVII.13].
- [23 January] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, Bassilla [IX.19]. Rome, St Emerentiana the martyr [XVII.13].
- [24 January] Rome, on the Via Salaria Nuova, <in> the cemetery of Maximus, Felicitas [I.5].
- [25 January] Rome, the translation of Paul the apostle. <Rome>, Fabian <and> Sebastian [III.88–9].
- [26 January] <Rome>, Fabian <and> Sebastian [III.88–9].
- [29 January] Rome, the death of the soldiers Papias and <Maurus> [XX.9].

February

- [2 February] Rome, at Fossombrone, on the Via Flaminia at the 164th mile from Rome, the dedication of the basilica of SS. Sixtus, Laurence, and Hippolytus. <Mentana>, Felicianus, Primus [XXI.7].
- [6 February] Rome, on the Via Appia, in her own cemetery,⁴ the death of Soteris the virgin [XXV.4].
- [8 February] Rome, the burial of St Paul the bishop.
- [10 February] Rome, on the Via Appia, the death of Soteris [XXV.4]. Rome, at the tenth mile of the Via Labicana, Zoticus and Amantius.
- [11 February] <Rome>, Amantius, Zoticus. Rome, Soteris [XXV.4]. Rome, Calogerus and Parthenius, martyrs [XXXIII.6].
- [13 February] <Rome>, Zoticus, Amantius.
- [14 February] At Terni, at the sixty-fourth mile of the Via Flaminia, the death of St Valentine [XXII.15]. Rome, on the Via Ardeatina, Felicula [VIII.17].
- [15 February] <Rome>, Zeno.
- [17 February] In Aquileia, Chrysogonus [II.8–9].

⁴ On the cemetery of Soteris, see de Rossi, 'Il cimitero di Santa Sotere', in *Roma sotterranea* III, pp. 5–192; Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 209–10; and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 142–3. In the opinion of Amore (*ibid.* p. 143), there once existed a *passio* of St Soteris, which has not come down to us.

[20 February] Rome, on the Via Appia, in the cemetery of Callistus, the burial of Pope Gaius (282–95).

[22 February] Rome, on the Via Tiburtina at S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, the death of St Concordia [XVI.32].

[24 February] Rome, at Porto, the deaths of Paulus and Primitivus [XXXIX.6?].

March

[2 March] <Rome>, Pope Lucius (253–4). In Roman Porto, Primitivus [XXXIX.6?].

[4 March] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the burial of Pope Lucius (253–4).

[12 March] Rome, *ad Ursum pileatum* [‘at the bear with a felt cap’], the burial of St Innocent the pope (402–17).

[14 March] Rome, *ad Ursum pileatum* [‘at the bear with a felt cap’], Pope Innocent (402–17).

[15 March] <Rome>, Alexander, Theodulus [XXXII.20].

[16 March] At Porto, Nonnus. <At Rome>, Cyriacus [XX.20].

[17 March] At Porto, Nonnus. Rome, Pope Alexander, Theodulus the deacon [XXXII.20].

[24 March] Rome, the martyr Cyrinus [XXII.4].

[26 March] Rome, in his own cemetery on the Via Labicana,⁵ the death of St Castulus [III.83].

April

[1 April] In Thessalonica, Chionia, Agape, and Irene [II.18].

[3 April] <Rome>, Sixtus the martyr [VI.4, XVI.18].

[6 April] Rome, Pope Sixtus I (c. 120).

[12 April] Rome, in the cemetery of Calepodius at the third mile of the Via Aurelia, the burial of Pope Julius (337–52).

[14 April] Rome, on the Via Appia in the cemetery of Praetextatus, SS. Tiburtius, Valerian, Maximus [IV.24]. Rome, in the *titulus*-church next to the <Baths> of Diocletian, <the burial> of Cyriacus, founder of the *titulus* [XX.20].

[15 April] In Piceno, on *Monte Aureo*, the death of Maro [VIII.19].

[18 April] Rome, Pope Eleutherius (c. 180) and Anthea his mother. <Likewise at Rome>, Parthenius, Calogerus [XXXIII.6].

[20 April] Rome, in the Great Cemetery on the Via Nomentana, Victor, Felix, Alexander, Papias [XX.9?], <Emerantianes>.

[21 April] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, Valerian, Tiburtius, Maximus [IV.24]. At Terracina in Campania, St Caesarius [VIII.25].

[22 April] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the burial of Pope Gaius (282–95). In the city of Cordula, the priests Parmenius, Elymas, and Chrysotelus, and the deacons Lucius and Mucius [XVI.3].

[26 April] In Roman Porto, Primitivus [XXXIX.6?].

[30 April] Rome, in the cemetery of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, the burial of Bishop Cyrinus [XXXII.14].

⁵ On the cemetery of Castulus on the Via Labicana, see Pergola and Barbini, *Le catacombe romane*, pp. 160–1, and Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 113–14.

May

- [3 May] Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, the deaths of SS. Eventius, Alexander, Theodulus [XXXII.20]. And on the Via Ardeatina, the death of Arbonus [Urban?].
- [9 May] Rome, on the Via Latina, Gordianus, Epimachus [XXVII.5].
- [10 May] Rome, on the Via Latina, in his own cemetery, Gordianus, and Epimachus [XXVII.5]. <Likewise at Rome> in the cemetery of Praetextatus, Maior the confessor. <Likewise at Rome> on the Via Latina *ad Centum Aulas* ['at the Hundred Halls'], Quartus and Quintus.
- [11 May] Rome, at the twenty-second mile of the Via Salaria, the death of St Anthimus. Rome, Nereus <and> Achilleus [VIII.18].
- [12 May] Rome, in their own cemetery, the brothers Nereus and Achilleus [VIII.18]. <Rome>, at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, the death of St Pancratius [XXV.4]. On the Via Aurelia, Soteris the virgin, and on the Via Labicana, at the sixth mile, Soteris [XXV.4].
- [17 May] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, <in the cemetery> of Bassilla, Victor. <Likewise at Rome in the cemetery> of Priscilla, the burial of Pope Liberius (352–66).
- [19 May] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the deaths of Parthenius <and> Calogerus [XXXIII.6]. Rome, the deaths of Calogerus and Parthenius, eunuchs of the emperor Decius and his wife; when one of them was the *praepositus cubiculi* and the other the *primicerius*, not wishing to sacrifice to idols, they were killed by Decius, and lie in peace in the cemetery next to the Via Appia [XXXIII.6]. <Likewise at Rome, on the Via Appia in the cemetery of Callistus>, Urban [XXX.19 (10)]. At Rome, Pudentiana [XV.4].
- [20 May] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, Bassilla [IX.19]. In Ostia, Aurelia.
- [24 May] In Roman Porto, the death of St Vincent [XXIX.11?].
- [25 May] <Rome>, in the cemetery of Praetextatus, the death of Pope Urban (222–30) [XXX.19 (10)].
- [26 May] Rome, Semetrius the martyr [XV.8].
- [27 May] Rome, at the sixteenth mile of the Via Nomentana, the death of Restitutus.
- [28 May] Rome, at the thirteenth mile of the Via Nomentana, Primus <and> Felicianus [XXI.7].
- [29 May] Rome, the death <of Petronilla> the virgin [VIII.15]. Rome, on the Via <Nomentana>, Restitutus. Likewise on the Via Tiburtina, the Seven Brothers [XXXVII.5–7?].
- [31 May] Rome, on the Via Aurelia, Processus <and> Martinianus [XIX.10].

June

- [1 June] Rome, Lucia the virgin and Auceia, king of the barbarians. Dedication <of the church> of St Nicomedes the martyr [VIII.17].
- [2 June] Rome, in the cemetery *inter duas lauros* ['between the two bay trees'] at the fourth mile of the Via Labicana, Marcellinus the priest and Peter the exorcist [XXIII.14].
- [5 June] Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Ardeatina, Felicula [VIII.16].
- [8 June] Rome, on the Via Aurelia, Nabor and Nazarius.
- [9 June] Rome, on the Via Nomentana, at the fifteenth mile *Ad arcus* ['at the arches'], Primus and Felicianus [XXI.7].
- [10 June] Rome, at the fourteenth mile of the Via Aurelia, the death of Basilides [XL.6].

- [11 June] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in her own cemetery, the death of St Bassilla [IX.19]. Likewise at Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Nomentana, the death of St Restitutus.
- [12 June] Rome, at the fifth mile of the Via Aurelia, Basilides [XL.6].
- [13 June] Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Ardeatina, Felicula [VIII.16].
- [17 June] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia *ad septem palumbas* ['at the seven doves'], SS. Blastus [XXII.2] <and> Diogenes.
- [18 June] Rome, in the cemetery of Balbina on the Via Ardeatina, Marcus and Marcellianus [III.84].
- [19 June] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via <Appia>, Hippolytus, Valeria, Marcellus [XXVIII.12, 14, 15].
- [24 June] Rome, in the cemetery *ad septem palumbas* ['at the seven doves'] on the Via Salaria Vecchia, SS. <John> and Festus. <Likewise at Rome>, Luceia <and Auceia> the king, with twenty-two others.
- [26 June] Rome, the martyrdom of the holy brothers, the martyrs John and Paul [XVIII.13]. Likewise at Rome, Luceia the virgin and Auceia, king of the barbarians.
- [27 June] Rome, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, the death of the seven brothers Crescens, Julian, Nemesius, Primitivus, Justinus, Stacteus, Eugenius [XXXVII.7]. <Likewise at Rome>, Crispus and Crispinianus [XVIII App. 4].
- [29 June] Rome, the deaths of the holy apostles, Peter on the Via Aurelia at the Vatican, but Paul on the Via Ostiense, both of them *in Catacumbas*, during the consulships of Bassus and Tuscus [AD 258].⁶ Likewise at Rome, the dedication of the ancient baptistery.⁷

July

- [1 July] Rome, the death of Lucia the virgin and Auceia the king, of Antoninus, Serenus, Victor, Orion, with eighteen others. In the same city, on the Via Aurelia, Processus and Martinianus [XIX.10].
- [2 July] Rome, in the cemetery of Damasus at the second mile of the Via Aurelia, Processus <and> Martinianus [XIX.10]. Likewise at Rome, on the Via Appia in the cemetery of Callistus, the burial of Pope Miltiades (310–14).
- [9 July] Rome, Felicitas with the seven brothers Felix, Philip, Martial, Vitalis, Alexander, and two others [I.5].
- [10 July] Rome, in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria, Felix, Philip [I.5]. In the cemetery <of the Giordani> Vitalis, Martial, Alexander [I.5]; <in the cemetery> of Maximus, Silanus [I.5]; <in the cemetery> of Praetextatus on the Via Appia, Ianuarius [I.5]; at the ninth mile of the Via Cornelia, Rufina <and> Secunda [XXXI.8]. At Castiglione [*Gabii*], at the twelfth mile of the Via Prenestina, Primitivus [XXXIX.6].
- [12 July] Rome, on the Via Prenestina, Primitivus [XXXIX.6].
- [15 July] In Roman Porto, that is, on the Isola Sacra, Eutropius and the sisters, Zosima and Bonosa.
- [16 July] In the town of Ostia, Hilarinus [XVIII.8].
- [18 July] Rome, at the ninth mile of the Via Tiburtina, Symphorosa, the mother with seven brothers; she was buried with them [XXXVII.7].

⁶ This confused entry derives from the *Depositio martyrum* (Appendix I, p. 634).

⁷ As Delehay points out, this refers to the baptistery built by Constantine in the Lateran.

- [20 July] Rome, on the Via Appia, at the third mile, Calogerus and Parthenius [XXXIII.6].
- [21 July] Rome, Praxedis [XV.8].
- [23 July] Rome, at the eighteenth mile of the Via Tiburtina, Vincent.
- [24 July] In the town of *Amiternum*, at the eighty-third mile of the Via Salaria, Victorinus with two others [VIII.20].
- [25 July] Rome, at Porto, the deaths of Acontius and Nonnus.
- [29 July] Rome, on the Via Portuense, <in the cemetery> of Pontianus, Abdon, and Sennes [VI.3, XVI.10]. Rome, on the Via Portuense *ad Sextum Philippi*, Simplicius, Faustinus, Beatrix [XXXVI.1–2], Rufus. Rome, on the Via Portuense, in his own cemetery, the death of Felix [XIV.3?].
- [30 July] Rome, in the cemetery of Pontianus *ad ursum pileatum* [‘at the bear with a felt cap’], the deaths of the martyrs Abdon and Sennes [VI.3, XVI.10].

August

- [1 August] Rome, the dedication of the first church built and consecrated by St Peter. Rome, at the thirtieth mile of the Via Prenestina, the death of St Secundinus.
- [2 August] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, St Stephen the pope (254–7) [XXVI.21]. In Bithynia, in the city of Nicaea, Theodota, with her three sons [II.31].
- [4 August] Rome, on the Via Tiburtina in the cemetery of St Laurence the martyr, Crescentio and Justinus [XVI.15–16]. On the Via Labicana, at the fourteenth mile from the City, the death of St Hyacinthus.
- [5 August] Rome, the dedication of the basilica of St Mary [S. Maria Maggiore].
- [6 August] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, the death of Pope Sixtus, the martyr (257–8) [VI.4, XVI.18]. <Likewise in the cemetery> of Praetextatus, Felicissimus, <and> Agapitus [XVI.18].
- [8 August] Rome, on the Via Appia at the fifteenth mile, in Albano, SS. Secundus, Severianus, Carpofores, Victorinus. Likewise at Rome, at the seventh mile of the Via Ostiense, Cyriacus, Largus, Crescentianus, Memmia, Juliana, Smaragdus [XX.24].
- [9 August] <Rome, on the Via> Tiburtina, Romanus [XVI.26]. Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, Sixtus (II), Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Melchiadis [i.e. Miltiades], Stephen, Urban, Lucius, Manon, Anteros, Numidianus, Laudicius, Julian, Polycarp.⁸
- [10 August] Rome, on the Via Tiburtina, in his own cemetery, the death of Laurence, deacon and martyr [VI.7, XVI.28–9].
- [11 August] Rome, on the Via Labicana *inter duas lauros* [‘between the two bay trees’], the death of Tiburtius [III.82]. <Likewise at Rome>, *ad duas domos* [‘at the two houses’] next to the <Baths of> Diocletian, the death of St Susanna [XI.28–9].
- [12 August] Rome, SS. Chrysanthus and Daria [X.26], and those who suffered martyrdom with them: Claudius, Hilaria, Jason, Maurus, and Seventy Soldiers [X.20–1].

⁸ This list of names records the popes (and other bishops) who were buried in the ‘Papal Crypt’ in the cemetery of Callistus: Sixtus II (257–8), Dionysius (260–7), Felix I (268–73), Eutychianus (274–82), Gaius (282–95), Miltiades (310–14), Stephen (254–7), Urban (222–30), Lucius (253–4), and Anteros (235–6). The remaining names are of bishops whose sees cannot be securely identified.

- [13 August] Rome, on the Via Tiburtina, Hippolytus the martyr [VI.8, XVI.31]; and on the Via Appia, <in the cemetery> of Callistus, <Pope> Pontianus (230–5).
- [14 August] Eusebius, founder of his *titulus*-church [XIII.2].
- [18 August] In the town of Prenestina, at the twenty-third mile, the death of Agapitus. <Rome>, on the Via Labicana, St Helen, the mother of Constantine.
- [21 August] In Roman Porto, Hippolytus.
- [22 August] Rome, on the Via Ostiense in his own cemetery, St Timotheus. In Roman Porto, Hippolytus.
- [23 August] Rome, in the cemetery *ad sanctum Laurentium*, Abundius <and> Irenaeus [XVI.32]. In Porto of the city of Rome, Hippolytus, who is called Nonnus. In Ostia, the deaths of SS. Cyriacus [XX.20] and Archelaus.
- [25 August] Rome, in his own cemetery at the eighteenth mile of the Via Nomentana, Eutyches [VIII.20].
- [26 August] Rome, in the cemetery of Bassilla, Maximilianus. At the twenty-sixth mile of the Via Prenestina, the martyr Quintus.
- [27 August] Rome, Hermes <in the cemetery> of Bassilla [XXXII.14].
- [28 August] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia, in the cemetery of Bassilla, Hermes [XXXII.14].
- [29 August] Rome, on the Via Ostiense, Felix <and> Adactus [XXXV.2]. Rome, St Sabina [XXXIV.15].
- [30 August] Rome, on the Via Ostiense, <in the cemetery> of Commodilla, Felix and Adactus [XXXV.2].

September

- [4 September] Rome, in the cemetery of Maximus *ad sanctam Felicitatem* on the Via Salaria <Nuova>, Pope Boniface (418–22).
- [5 September] In Roman Porto, Taurinus, Herculanus, and Acontius.
- [6 September] Rome, on the Via Salaria, in the town of Riete at the [forty-first] mile from the City, the death of Bishop Eleutherius.
- [9 September] Rome, on the Via Labicana, *inter duas lauros* [‘between the two bay trees’] in his own cemetery, the death of St Gorgonius. In Sabine territory, at the thirtieth mile <from the City>, Hyacinthus.
- [10 September] Rome, the burial of Pope Hilarus (461–8).
- [11 September] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia in the cemetery of Bassilla, SS. Protus and Hyacinthus, who were the teachers of Christian doctrine to St Eugenia and Bassilla [IX.19]. Rome, in Porto, Hippolytus.
- [12 September] Rome, the deaths of SS. Protus <and> Hyacinthus [IX.19].
- [14 September] Rome, on the Via Appia in the cemetery of Callistus, Pope Cornelius (251–2) [VII.3].
- [15 September] Rome, the martyr Nicomedes [VIII.17].
- [16 September] Rome, on the Via Nomentana *ad Capream* [‘at the she-goat’], in the Great Cemetery, Victor, Felix, Alexander, Papias, Emerentianes. At Rome, the martyrdom of St Caecilia [IV.32].
- [22 September] Rome, on the Via Salaria Vecchia in her own cemetery, the death of Bassilla [IX.19].
- [24 September] Rome, <in the cemetery> of Priscilla, the burial of Pope Liberius (352–66).
- [26 September] Rome, on the Via Appia in the cemetery of Callistus, the burial of St Eusebius the pope (308). In Albano, Senator.

- [27 September] Rome, the deaths of SS. Cosmas and Damian, martyrs.
 [28 September] Rome, *ad Guttas* ['at the drips'], St Stacteus.
 [29 September] Rome, at the sixth mile of the Via Salaria <Nuova>, the dedication of the basilica of St Michael <the Archangel>.

October

- [2 October] Rome, the death of St Eusebius the pope (308).
 [3 October] Rome, *ad Ursum pileatum* ['at the bear with a felt cap'], Candida [cf. XXV.10].
 [4 October] Rome, <in the cemetery of Balbina>, Pope Marcus (336).
 [6 October] Rome, on the Via Ardeatina, in the cemetery of Balbina, Pope Marcus (336).
 [7 October] Rome, on the Via Appia, the burial of Pope Marcus (336).
 [8 October] Rome, <the death> of Eusebius, the founder of his *titulus*-church [XIII.2].
 [9 October] Rome, *inter duas lauros* ['between the two bay trees'], Genuinus.
 [12 October] Rome, on the Via Laurentina, the death of St Hedistus. Rome, on the Via Aurelia, Callistus [XII.9].
 [14 October] Rome, on the Via Aurelia, in the cemetery of Calepodius, Pope Callistus (217–22) [XII.9].
 [15 October] <Rome>, on the Via Aurelia, in his own cemetery, <Callistus> [XII.9].
 [18 October] In the town of Ostia, Agnes.⁹
 [19 October] In Ostia, the death of Asterius [XII.9, XXII.14].
 [25 October] Rome, on the Via Salaria <Nuova>, the Sixty-Two Soldiers, whose names are known to God alone, and who are buried in the cemetery of Thrason [X.20].
 [31 October] *Amiternum*, Victorinus [VIII.20].

November

- [2 November] the dedication of the basilica of SS. Sixtus, Hippolytus, and Laurence.
 [8 November] Rome, on the Caelian Hill, Sympronianus, Claudius, Nicostratus, and Castorius [i.e. the 'Four Crowned Martyrs'] [XXIV.22].
 [10 November] Rome, the burial of St Leo the pope (440–61).
 [17 November] Rome, in Trastevere, Caecilius.
 [22 November] Rome, Caecilia [IV.32].
 [23 November] Rome, the death of St Clement, pope and martyr [cf. V.7]. <Likewise> in Rome, in the cemetery of Maximus, Felicitas [I.5].
 [24 November] Rome, the death of Chrysogonus [cf. II.9]. Likewise at Rome, <on the Via Salaria> in the town of Rieti, Bishop Eleutherius and Antia.
 [26 November] Rome, the burial of Pope Siricius (384–99).
 [27 November] <Rome>, the death of Bishop Optatus.
 [29 November] Rome, <in the cemetery> of Thrason, Saturninus [XX.9], Chrysanthus, Daria, Maurus, and others [X.26].

December

- [1 December] Rome, the death of Candida [cf. XXV.10, XXXVIII.5].
 [2 December] Rome, <in the cemetery of Pontianus>, the death of Pigenius [XXXVIII.5]. <Likewise in the cemetery> of Pontianus, Candida [cf. XXV.10, XXXVIII.5].

⁹ Delehay suggests that this entry refers to a church in Ostia dedicated to St Agnes.

- [7 December] Rome, Pope Eutychianus (274–82).
- [8 December] Rome, in the cemetery of Callistus on the Via Appia, Pope Eutychianus (274–82).
- [10 December] Rome, Pope Damasus (366–84). <Likewise in Rome, in the cemetery> of Thrason, Maurus [XX.9].
- [11 December] Rome, the burial of Pope Damasus (366–84).
- [19 December] Rome, Lucia the virgin and Auceia the king, and Antonius, Irenaeus, Theodore, Papianus, Apollonia, Apamia, Paenus, Cusseus, Orion, Papiscus, Satorus, Victor, with nine others.
- [20 December] Rome, Pope Zephyrinus (198–217). <Likewise at Rome>, Ignatius the martyr. Elsewhere, Chrysanthus and Daria [X.26].
- [21 December] Rome, Pope Zephyrinus (198–217).
- [22 December] Rome, on the Via Labicana *inter duas lauros* ['between the two bay trees'], the death of the Thirty Martyrs. In Roman Porto, the death of St Ariston.
- [23 December] Rome, Peter the apostle, Linus, Cletus, Anacletus, Evaristus, Sixtus I, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Anicetus, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Callistus, Urban, Fabian, Cornelius, Stephen, Sixtus II, Felix I, Eutychianus, Marcellus.

APPENDIX IV

Seventh-century Pilgrim Itineraries to Roman Churches and Cemeteries

As the cult of martyrs increased in popularity, people came to Rome from farther away—from north of the Alps and from Britain and Ireland—in order to visit the shrines of the martyrs, either the urban churches in their names, or the suburban cemeteries where they were buried.¹ In order to facilitate these visits, the catacombs were provided with up- and down-staircases (to improve one-way pedestrian traffic) and skylights to facilitate visibility in the martyrs' tombs;² at the same time, enterprising Romans compiled itineraries—in effect 'tour guides'—which would guide the visitors to the principal sites and tell them which martyrs were commemorated or buried there.³ The three earliest of these itineraries were produced at Rome during the seventh century, and taken from Rome back to the countries of the visitors' origins, and copied and preserved there. As a group the itineraries help to elucidate the sacred landscape of late antique Rome, in the period before martyrs' remains were removed by various popes from the suburban cemeteries into the safety of urban churches within the walls of Rome. They throw valuable light on the topography described in the *passiones* of the martyrs translated in this work. The itineraries have been collected and edited, with detailed commentary, by Valentini and Zucchetti,⁴ and the serious student of palaeochristian Rome will consult their edition; what is presented here are excerpts (in translation) from the itineraries which principally pertain to martyrs who are mentioned in the *passiones* translated above; I have therefore omitted descriptions in the itineraries of sites pertaining to saints not mentioned in the *passiones* (even extremely important sites such as, for example, St Peter's on the Vatican Hill). In other words, the present excerpts are simply intended as an aid to understanding the *passiones* translated here; for ease of consultation, I supply (in square brackets and bold print) cross-references to the burials of Roman martyrs described in the *passiones* translated here. The parts of the itineraries pertaining to suburban cemeteries are organized according to the major roads on which they were to be found; I reproduce that organization here. I have normalized the spelling of the martyrs' names to be consistent with that used in the translations; and where the names of martyrs have

¹ On the phenomenon of pilgrimage to martyrial shrines, see *DACL* XIV/1, cols. 40–176 [H. Leclercq], esp. 40–65 on pilgrimage to Rome; see also B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrt und Pilgerwesen in Antike und alter Kirche* (Münster, 1950), and D. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change* (Woodbridge, 1998).

² See the important study by V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Itinera ad sanctos. Testimonianze monumentali del passaggio dei pellegrini nei santuari del suburbio romano', in *Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie*, ed. Dassmann and Engemann, II, pp. 763–75.

³ On the Roman itineraries in general, see *DACL* VII/2, cols. 1841–1922, at 1902–22 [H. Leclercq], and Barker, *Rome of the Pilgrims and Martyrs*, pp. 93–126.

⁴ Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*.

been transmitted corruptly, and have been corrected by previous editors, I silently incorporate the editors' corrections.

(a) *Notitia Ecclesiarum Urbis Romae*

The *Notitia* is considered to be the oldest of the surviving itineraries; in the opinion of Valentini and Zucchetti, it was probably compiled during the pontificate of Honorius (625–38).⁵

1. [Via Flaminia]. Then you will go through the City to the north, until you arrive at the Porta Flaminia, where St Valentine the martyr rests on the Via Flaminia, in a large basilica which (Pope) Honorius restored [XXII.15], and other martyrs lie beneath the earth in this northern region.

2. [Via Salaria Vecchia]. Then you go to the east until you arrive at the church of John the Martyr, on the Via Salinaria: there Diogenes the martyr lies in peace, and Festus the martyr beneath the ground, and Blastus the martyr beneath the ground [XXII.3]. . . Then you go south on the Via Salaria (Vecchia), until you come to St Hermes, where first of all St Bassilla, virgin and martyr, rests in a basilica [IX.19]; in another (basilica) is the martyr Maximus, and St Hermes the martyr lies there deep beneath the ground (in the catacomb) [XXXII.14]. And in another crypt is Protus the martyr and Hyacinthus [IX.19], and then Victor the martyr. . .

3. [Via Salaria Nuova]. Then you will come to St Felicitas, on another road, which is likewise called Salaria. She lies there in a church above the ground [I.5], and Boniface, pope and martyr, in another place, and her sons [*recte* 'son', that is, Silvanus] beneath the ground [I.5]. Then, on the same road, you will arrive at the church of St Saturninus, pope and martyr [cf. XX.4]; in another church, Daria the virgin rests, and Chrysanthus the martyr [X.26]. Then you will arrive by the same road at the crypt where St Hilaria rests [X.21], and then, on the same road, (you come) to St Alexander the martyr; there, too, rest Theodulus and Eventius, and Alexander the martyr rests in peace far in the interior (of the catacomb) [XXXII.20]. Then, ascending on the same road to the church of St Silvester, a multitude of saints lies there: first of all, Silvester, the holy pope and confessor, and at his feet, Pope Siricius, and on the right side, Pope Caelestinus and Pope Marcellus [XX.9]. The martyrs Philip and Felix and a multitude of saints (lie beneath) the main altar [I.5], and Semetrios lies in a crypt by where you come out [XV.8], and in another are SS. Pudentiana the martyr and Praxedis [XV.4, 8].

4. [Via Nomentana]. And afterwards you travel to the east until you come to St Emerentiana the martyr, who lies in a church above the ground [XVII.13], and two martyrs in the catacombs beneath, Victor and Alexander. Then on the Via Nomentana (you come to) the church of St Agnes, which is beautiful, in which she lies alone, and Pope Honorius restored this church with wondrous workmanship [XVII.13].

5. [Via Tiburtina]. Afterwards you leave that road, and you will come to St Hippolytus the martyr, who rests in peace beneath the ground in a crypt [VI.8, XVI.31], and the martyr Concordia, his [Hippolytus'] nurse, lies at the entrance [XVI.32]; in another tomb, St Tryphonina, the queen and martyr, and the martyr Cyrilla, her daughter [XVI.34], whom Messius Decius murdered—his own wife and

⁵ *Ibid.* II, pp. 67–99.

daughter! Afterwards you will arrive at the church of St Laurence: there are two great basilicas there, in the most attractive of which (St Laurence) rests [VI.7, XVI.29]; and there is a small tomb outside the church to the west. There lie SS. Abundius and Irenaeus the martyr, on the Via Tiburtina [XVI.32] ... and in another church, above ground, many martyrs lie (in peace). First is Cyriaca, the holy widow and martyr [XVI.29], and in another place, St Justinus, and next to him St Crescentio the martyr [XVI.15–16], and a multitude of saints, and far away in a deep crypt is St Romanus the martyr [XVI.26]. Then you ascend to the church of Agapitus, the martyr and deacon of Pope Sixtus (II) [XVI.18].

6. [Via Labicana]. In the northern part of the church of Helena is first of all, the martyr Tiburtius [III.82; cf. XXV.12]. Afterwards, you will go into the catacomb: there lie the holy martyrs Peter the priest and Marcellinus the martyr [XXIII.14] ... and in the third crypt are the Four Crowned Martyrs [XXIV.22], and St Helena in her rotunda.⁶

7. [Via Latina]. Then you will arrive at St Gordianus the martyr, whose body lies in peace beneath the main altar in the church of St Epimachus [XXVII.5] ... Then you will come on the same road to a catacomb: here on this same road lies St Eugenia, virgin and martyr, in a crypt (beneath) the church [IX.21], and in another place, Nemesius the martyr [XXVI.11].

8. [Via Appia]. Then you will arrive by the Via Appia at (the church of) St Sebastian the martyr, whose body lies in a lower position [III.88], and in the western part of the church you descend by steps to where St Cyrinus, pope and martyr, lies; and on the same road, to the north, (you come) to the holy martyrs Tiburtius and Valerian and Maximus [IV.24]. There you will enter into a large crypt, and there you will find St Urban, bishop and confessor [IV.5–6; XXX.19 (10)], and in another place, Felicissimus and Agapitus, martyrs and deacons of Sixtus [XVI.18], and in a third place, Cyrinus the martyr [XXXII.14], and in a fourth, Ianuarius the martyr [cf. I.5]. On the same road, (you come to) St Caecilia [IV.32]; there is there a countless multitude of martyrs: first of all, Sixtus (II), pope and martyr [VI.4, XVI.18]; St Caecilia, virgin and martyr [IV.32]; Cornelius, pope and martyr, lies deep (underground) in another crypt [VII.3]. Afterwards you will arrive at St Soteris, virgin and martyr [XXV.4].

9. [Via Ardeatina]. And you leave the Via Appia and arrive at St Marcus the pope and martyr, and then to St Damasus, pope and martyr, on the Via Ardeatina; and there, in another church, you will find the two deacons and martyrs Marcus and Marcellianus, (who were) brothers, whose bodies lie above, beneath the main altar [III.84]; then you descend by stairs to the holy martyrs Nereus and Achilleus [VIII.18].

10. [Via Ostiense]. And thus you proceed to the west, and you will find St Felix, bishop and martyr, and you descend by stairs to his body [XXXV.2];⁷ and thus you arrive at (the church of) St Paul on the Via Ostiense [...].

⁶ On the mausoleum of (St) Helena, the mother of Constantine, see F. W. Deichmann and A. Tschira, 'Das Mausoleum der Kaiserin Helena und die Basilika der heiligen Marcellinus und Petrus an der Via Labicana vor Rom'; L. Venditelli, 'La conservazione e la valorizzazione del mausoleo di S. Elena. Nuovi dati dai lavori di scavo e restauro', in Guidobaldi and Guidobaldi, *Ecclesiae urbis*, I, pp. 771–92; J. Guyon, 'Helenae Basilica, Ecclesia, Mausoleum, Rotunda', *LTUR. Suburbium* III, pp. 45–9, with figs. 38–42; and Brandenburg, *Ancient Churches*, pp. 55–60, with fig. 23.

⁷ This is the Felix who was martyred with Adauctus, with whom he is buried in the cemetery of Commodilla, near to (but not on) the Via Ostiense; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 209–11.

11. [Via Portuense]. In the western part of the Tiber [i.e. in Trastevere] is the church of the blessed Felix the martyr, in which his body lies in peace,⁸ and that of Alexander the martyr.⁹ Then you enter into a large church: there the holy martyrs Abdon and Sennes lie in peace [VI.3, XVI.10].

12. [Via Aurelia]. From there you walk to St Pancratius, whose body lies in peace in an attractive church on the Via Aurelia, which St Honorius the pope rebuilt in large part [XXV.4]. And you climb back up (the Via Aurelia) to a church; there lie in peace SS. Processus and Martinianus, beneath the ground [XIX.10], and St Lucina, virgin and martyr, in the upper part (of the catacomb). Then you will proceed on the same road to the two holy popes and martyrs, (both named) Felix [XIV.3]. Afterwards, on the same road, you will arrive at a church: there you will find St Callistus, pope and martyr [XII.9].

**(b) *De Locis Sanctis Martyrum Quae Sunt Foris Civitatis Romae;
Ecclesiae Quae Intus Romae Habentur (Itinerarium Salisburgense)***

This text, also known as the *Itinerarium Salisburgense*, was apparently composed at some time during the decade 635–45.¹⁰ It consists of two parts: first, a list of suburban cemeteries on the principal roads leading out of Rome, beginning with St Peter's on the Via Cornelia (i.e. the Vatican), and, unlike the previous itinerary, proceeding counterclockwise around Rome; and secondly, a list of the principal churches within Rome.

1. [Via Cornelia]. [...] And next to this same road are SS. Rufina and Secunda [XXXI.8]; and SS. Martha, Marius, Abacuc, and Audifax [XXII.19]; and many other saints lie there.

2. [Via Aurelia]. From there, not far away on the left-hand side next to the Via Aurelia, are SS. Processus and Martinianus [XIX.10]; St Pancratius [XXV.4]; ... St Felix [XIV.3]; St Callistus [XII.9]; St Calepodius [XII.6]; and many others lie buried there.

3. [Via Portuense]. Next to the Via Portuense, which is in the western part of the City, SS. Abdon and Sennes [VI.3, XVI.10] ... St Felix,¹¹ SS. Simplicius, Faustinus, and Beatrix [XXXVI.1–2], all lie in peace.

4. [Via Ostiense]. ... And not far from there is the church of St Felix, where he lies in peace, (and) with him, Adauctus, who hastened to martyrdom when (Felix) passed on to heaven, and they both lie in the one place [XXXV.2]; and there, too, lies the martyr Nemesius [cf. XXVI.11?],¹² with many others.

5. [Via Ardeatina]. Next to the Via Ardeatina is the church of St Petronilla; and there too SS. Nereus and Achilleus, and Petronilla herself, are buried [VIII.18]. Near to that same road, St Damasus, the pope, is buried, and his sister Martha; and in

⁸ There is no surviving *passio* of this St Felix the martyr (who is not to be confused with Pope Felix, buried on the Via Aurelia), who was known to have been buried in the cemetery *ad Insalatos* on the Via Portuense; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 237–9.

⁹ This Alexander the martyr is not recorded in any other source, and he is not mentioned in any surviving *passio*; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 239.

¹⁰ Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, II, pp. 101–31; also de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*, I, pp. 141–3; and CCSL CLXXV, pp. 315–22.

¹¹ The identity of a martyr named Felix, buried on the Via Portuense, is unknown; see n. 8.

¹² It is not clear whether this Nemesius, buried in the cemetery of Commodilla, off the Via Ostiense, is identical with the Nemesius who in the *passio* of Pope Stephen is explicitly said to be buried on the Via Latina (XXVI.11); see discussion by Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 212–13.

another church not far away, Marcus and Marcellianus are honoured [III.84]; and from there, in (yet) another church, (Pope) Marcus is held in honour, along with (Pope) Marcellinus.¹³

6. [Via Appia]. Next to the Via Appia, in the eastern part of the City, is the church of St Soteris the martyr [XXV.4], and with her lie many martyrs; and next to the same road is the church of St Sixtus, the pope, where he lies in peace [VI.4, XVI.18]; and there also lies St Caecilia [IV.32]; and there St Tarsicius [XXVI.22] lies, together with St Zephyrinus, in one tomb;¹⁴ and there (is) St Eusebius;¹⁵ and SS. Calogerus and Parthenius lie in individual tombs [XXXIII.6]. Not far from there, in the cemetery of Callistus, Cornelius and Cyprian lie in peace in the church [VII.3]. Next to the same road is the church of many saints: that is, of Ianuarius, who was one of the seven sons of St Felicitas, the eldest by birth [cf. I.5]; and (Pope) Urban [IV.5–6; XXX.19 (10)]; and Agapitus and Felicissimus [XVI.18]; and Tiburtius, Valerian, and Maximus [IV.24], and many (other) martyrs lie in peace there. And next to this same road is the church of St Sebastian the martyr, where he lies in peace [III.89].

7. [Via Latina]. Next to the Via Latina is the church of St Gordianus, where he lies buried with his brother, Epimachus, in one tomb [XXVII.5]. There too are Quartus and Quintus,¹⁶ and Sulpicius and Servilianus [VIII.24], and Sophia and Trophimus,¹⁷ with many martyrs, lie buried in peace. And next to this same road is the (hypogean) basilica of Tertullinus, where he lies with many martyrs [XXVI.17]. The church of St Eugenia is also next to this road, where she herself, together with her mother, lies in the one tomb [IX.21]; there, too, is St Stephen, the pope, with his clergy numbering twenty-eight martyrs [XXVI.21]; and there is St Nemesis [XXVI.11]; and SS Olym-pius, Symphronius, Theodulus, Superius.¹⁸

8. [Via Labicana]. Next to the Via Labicana is the church of St Helena, where she lies in body; and there the following saints lie buried: SS. Marcellinus and Peter [XXIII.14]; St Tiburtius [III.82; cf. XXIII.12]; St Maximus;¹⁹ the Four Crowned Martyrs, that is, Claudius, Nicostratus, Symphronianus, Castorius, Simplicius [XXIV.22].

9. [Via Tiburtina]. . . . And near to that same road is the Great Church (*ecclesia maior*) of St Laurence, in which his body was first buried; and a new basilica of wondrous beauty was built there, where he now lies in peace [VI.7, XVI.29]; and

¹³ According to the *Depositio episcoporum* (Appendix I, p. 636), Pope Marcus (336) was buried in the cemetery of Balbina, on the Via Ardeatina (see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 197); but, according to the same source, Pope Marcellinus (295–303) was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla, on the Via Nomentana. The identity of the present ‘Marcellinus’ is therefore uncertain.

¹⁴ It is not certain that Pope Zephyrinus (199–217) died as a martyr; he is known to have been buried in the cemetery of Callistus (Via Appia), but not in the ‘Papal Crypt’; his remains, together with those of Tarsicius, were later translated to the intramural church of S. Silvestro in Capite (Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, pp. 144–5).

¹⁵ This is Pope Eusebius (308) who, according to the *Depositio episcoporum*, was buried in the cemetery of Callistus (Appendix I, p. 636); he is not to be confused with the martyr Eusebius, the priest, who is the subject of no. XIII.

¹⁶ SS. Quartus and Quintus are commemorated in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* against 10 May (see Appendix III, p. 653); but otherwise nothing is known of them. They do not figure in any surviving *passio*.

¹⁷ Nothing further is known of Trophimus and Sophia; see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 131.

¹⁸ On these martyrs, who were reportedly buried in the cemetery of Apronianus on the Via Latina, but who are not recorded in a surviving *passio*, see Amore, *I martiri di Roma*, p. 133.

¹⁹ The identity of this martyr Maximus is unknown.

there, too, beneath the same altar Abundius is buried [XVI.32], and outside in the porch is the the stone which at one time hung around the neck of Abundius when he was thrown down a well; and there are buried Irenaeus [XVI.32], Julian, Primitivus, Tacteus [*sic*, for Stacteus], Nemesius, Eugenius, Justinus, Crescentianus [*sic*, for Crescens] [XXXVII.7], Romanus [XVI.26]; and St Cyriaca [XVI.14, 29], St Symphorosa [XXXVII.7] and Justina are buried there with many martyrs. Then to the north, up a hill, is the basilica of St Hippolytus, where he, with his entire household of nineteen martyrs, now lies [VI.8, XVI.31]; there is a cell there in which Laurence once was; and there is Tryphonia, the wife of Decius the Caesar, and Cyrilla, his daughter [XVI.34]; between these two, Concordia [XVI.32] and many martyrs lie buried.

10. [Via Nomentana]. Next to the Via Nomentana is St Nicomedes [VIII.17]; and next to the same road is the basilica of St Agnes, of wondrous beauty, where she lies in the body [XVII.13]; and next to there, her sister Emerentiana sleeps, in another basilica [XVII.13]. There, too, in a separate church, Constantia, the daughter of Constantine, lies in peace [XVII.16]; and SS. Alexander, Felix, Papias, Victor, and many others sleep there.

11. [Via Salaria Nuova]. Next to the Via Salaria is the church of St Felicitas, where she herself lies in body [I.5]; and there, too, Silvanus her son, one of seven, is buried [I.5]. Next to that same road, St Saturninus sleeps in another church, with many martyrs [cf. XX.4]; and in (yet) another church are SS. Chrysanthus and Daria the virgin, with sixty-two other martyrs [X.26]; and near there lie SS. Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial, who are three of the seven sons of St Felicitas [I.5]. Near to the same Via Salaria, St Silvester lies, and at his feet the holy Pope Siricius, and many others, that is, the holy pope Caelestinus, SS. Pudentiana and Praxedis [XV.4, 8], St Marcellus [XX.22], . . . SS. Felix and Philip, two of the seven (sons of St Felicitas) [I.5], (and) St Semetrios [XV.8].

12. [Via Salaria Vecchia] . . . And from there, towards the west, appears the basilica of St Hermes, where the martyr himself lies deep in the ground [XXXII.14], and St Bassilla [IX.19]; and in another crypt, SS. Hyacinthus and Protus [IX.19] . . . Not far from there to the west is the church of St John the martyr . . . there (lie) St Diogenes and St Festus and St Liberatus and St Blastus [XXII.3] and St Maurus.

13. [Via Flaminia]. From there, near to the Via Flaminia, appears the wonderfully decorated church of St Valentine the martyr, where he himself lies in the body [XXII.15]; and many saints are buried in the same place, on the northern side.

14. [Churches within Rome itself]. The basilica of St Anastasia [II], where are kept the crosses which are carried during stational processions. The basilica of SS. John and Paul [XVIII], where they are both buried in one tomb. The basilica of St Chrysogonus [II]. The basilica of St Clement [V]. The basilica of St Marcellus [XX].

**(c) *Notitia Portarum, Viarum, Ecclesiarum circa Urbem Romam*
(the *Itinerarium Malmesburiense*, or ‘Malmesbury Itinerary’)**

This itinerary is preserved only in the *Gesta regum* (c.1125) of William of Malmesbury (c.1090–1142), who inserted it into his discussion of Rome and Pope Urban II (1088–90).²⁰ To judge from the churches and cemeteries which it describes, it was

²⁰ Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, II, pp. 133–53; see also *William of Malmesbury: Gesta regum Anglorum I*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), pp. 614–20 (iv. 352); and CCSL CLXXV, pp. 325–8.

compiled during the period 648–82.²¹ Unlike the two previous itineraries, this itinerary's entries begin by indicating the city gate from which the tour begins; the gates, and roads which issue from them, are then described in clockwise order.

1. [Porta Cornelia]. First, the *porta Cornelia*, which is now called the 'Gate of St Peter', and the *Via Cornelia*... On the same road is another church, in which the holy virgins, Rufina and Secunda, rest [XXXI.8]. In a third church are Marius and Martha; and also Audifax and Abacuc, their sons [XXII.19].

2. [Porta Flaminia]. Second, the *porta Flaminia*, which is now called the 'Gate of St Valentine', and the *Via Flaminia*; and when it reaches the Pons Milvius, it is called the *Via Ravennana*, because it leads to Ravenna. There, at the first mile outside (the city walls), St Valentine rests in his church [XXII.15].

3. [Porta Pinciana]. Third, the *porta Pinciana*, and the road which bears the same name; but it loses that name when it reaches the *Via Salaria*; and near there, in the place called 'Cucumber Hill', lie the martyrs John, Festus, Liberalis, Diogenes, Blastus [XXII.3], Lucina; and in one tomb, 260, and in another, thirty, martyrs.

4. [Porta Salaria]. Fourth, the *porta* and *Via Salaria*, which is now named after St Silvester. There, next to the road, St Hermes lies in peace [XXXII.14]; and SS. Bassilla [IX.19] and Protus and Hyacinthus [IX.19]. Then the basilica of St Felicitas, where she rests with Silvanus, her son [cf. I.5]. There, in another church, are SS. Chrysanthus and Daria [X.26]. And in another church are SS. Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial, sons of St Felicitas [cf. I.5]. Then the basilica of St Silvester, where he lies covered with a marble sarcophagus, and the martyrs... Philip and Felix [cf. I.5]; and nearby... rest Semetrios [XV.8], Praxedis, and Pudentiana [XV.4, 8].

5. [Porta Nomentana]. Fifth, the *porta Nomentana*; there is St Nicomedes [VIII.17], priest and martyr, with a road called by the same name. Near the road are the church and body of St Agnes [XVII.13]; in another church are St Emerentiana [XVII.13]; and (further on) the martyrs Alexander, Felix, and Papias. At the seventh mile of the same road rests the holy pope Alexander, with Eventius and Theodulus [XXXII.20].

6. [Porta Tiburtina]. Sixth, the *porta* and *Via Tiburtina*, which is now called the 'Gate of St Laurence'. Next to this road lies St Laurence in his own church [VI.7, XVI.29]; and Abundius the martyr [XVI.32]. And near there, in another church, lie these martyrs: Cyriaca, Romanus, Justinus, Crescentio [XVI.15–16, 29]. And not far away is the basilica of St Hippolytus, where he rests together with his household, that is, eighteen (persons) [VI.8, XVI.31]. And there rest the blessed Tryphonia, wife of Decius, and his daughter Cyrilla [XVI.34], and his [Hippolytus'] nurse Concordia [XVI.32]. And at another place on this road is the church of Agapitus the martyr [XVI.18].

7. [Porta Maior]. Seventh, the *porta* now called Maior was formerly the Sessorian, and the *Via Labicana*, which proceeds from there to (the memorial) of the blessed Helena. Nearby are SS. Marcellinus and Peter [XXIII.14], Tiburtius [III.82; cf. XXV.12], Genuinus, Gorgonius, and Forty Soldiers, and countless others; and not far away are the Four Crowned Martyrs [XXIV.22].

8. [Porta S. Iohannis]. Eighth, the *porta* of St John, which is called *porta Asinaria* in ancient sources.

²¹ De Rossi, *Roma sotterranea* I, p. 146; and see n. 22, on the translation to S. Stefano Rotondo of SS. Primus and Felicianus.

9. [Porta Metrovia]. Ninth, the gate which is called the Metrovian Gate; and near both of these [i.e. this and the Porta S. Iohannis] lies the Via Latina.

10. [Porta Latina]. Tenth, the *porta* and the Via Latina. Next to it, in one church, lie the martyrs Gordianus and Epimachus [XXVII.5], Sulpicius and Servilianus [VIII.24], Quintus and Quartus, Sophia, and Trophimus. And nearby, in another place, is Tertullinus [XXVI.17], and not far away, the church of the blessed Eugenia [IX.21], in which lies Claudia, her mother; and Pope Stephen, with his clergy [XXVI.21], numbering nineteen, and Nemesius, the deacon [XXVI.11].

11. [Porta Appia]. Eleventh, the *porta* and the Via Appia. There lie in peace St Sebastian [III.88] and Cyrinus, and there once lay the bodies of the Apostles. And a little nearer to Rome are the martyrs Ianuarius [cf. I.5], Urban [IV.5–6; XXX.19 (10)], Xenon, Cyrinus [XXXII.14], Agapitus, and Felicissimus [XVI.18]. And in another church, Tiburtius, Valerian, Maximus [IV.24]. Not far away is the church of the martyr Caecilia [IV.32], and buried there are (the bishops) Stephen, Sixtus (II) [VI.4, XVI.18], Zepherinus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Marcellus, Eutychianus, Dionysius, Anteros, Pontianus, Lucius, Optatius, Julian; and SS. Calogerus and Parthenius [XXXIII.6]; and Tarsicius [XXVI.22] and Policamus, martyrs. There, too, is the church of St Cornelius and his body [VII.3]. And in another church, St Soteris [XXV.4]; and not far away rest the martyrs Hippolytus, Hadrias, Eusebius, Maria, Martana, Paulina, Valeria, Marcellus [XXVIII.12–15]; and nearby is Pope Marcus, in his own church. Between the Via Appia and the Via Ostiense is the Via Ardeatina, where lie Marcus and Marcellianus [III.84], and there lies Pope Damasus in his own church; and not far away St Petronilla, and Nereus and Achilleus [VIII.18]; and several others.

12. [Porta Ostiensis]. Twelfth, the *porta* and Via Ostiensis; it is now called the ‘Gate of St Paul’ ... and not far away in the church of St Thecla are the martyrs Felix and Adauctus [XXXV.2], and Nemesius [cf. XXVI.11?].

13. [Porta Portuensis]. Thirteenth, the *porta* and Via Portuensis. Near there, in one church, are the martyrs Felix and Alexander; and Abdon and Sennes [VI.3, XVI.10].

14. [Porta Aurelia]. Fourteenth, the *porta* and Via Aurelia, which is now called the ‘Gate of St Pancratius’, because he lies next to it in his own church [XXV.4]. ... And in another basilica are SS. Processus and Martinianus [XIX.10]; and in a third, the two saints named Felix [XIV.3]; and in a fourth, St Callistus and Calepodius [XII.9]; and in a fifth, St Basilides, at the twelfth mile [XL.6].

15. Within the city, on the Caelian Hill, are the martyrs John and Paul in their house, which was made into a church following their martyrdom [XVIII.13]. ... On the same hill is the church of St Stephen the Protomartyr, and there are buried the martyrs Primus and Felicianus [cf. XXI.7].²²

²² The remains of the martyrs Primus and Felicianus were translated from Mentana to the church of S. Stefano Rotondo in 648 by Pope Theodore (642–9); see *LP*, trans. Davis, p. 70. This translation has the effect of dating the ‘Malmesbury Itinerary’ to after 648.

APPENDIX V

The Commemoration of Roman Martyrs in Early Roman Liturgical Books

(a) The Canon of the Mass

Two intercessory prayers in the Canon of the Mass (that is, the fixed and unchanging part of the Mass, which is repeated whenever mass is celebrated)—the *Communicantes* and the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*—contain lists of saints to whom the congregation's prayers are addressed. It is probable that the prayers took their present form after the liturgical reforms of Pope Gelasius (492–6); given the names of the Roman saints in question, an origin around the turn of the fifth century seems most likely.¹ The Latin texts of these prayers have been printed by V. L. Kennedy² and by B. Botte;³ I print the modern English version (Vatican II) of the two relevant prayers,⁴ with the names of the martyrs whose *passiones* are translated in the present volume given in bold:

[*Communicantes*]: In communion with those whose memory we venerate, especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ, and blessed Joseph, her Spouse, your blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude: Linus, Cletus, **Clement**, **Sixtus**, **Cornelius**, Cyprian, **Laurence**, **Chrysogonus**, **John and Paul**, Cosmas and Damian, and all your Saints: through their merits and prayers, grant that in all things we may be defended by your protecting help.⁵

[*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*]: To us also, your sinful servants, who hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, **Alexander**, **Marcellinus (and) Peter**, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, **Agnes**, **Caecilia**, **Anastasia**, and all your saints: admit us, we beg you, into their company, not weighing our merits, but granting us your pardon.⁶

¹ See J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. F. A. Brunner, 2 vols. (Westminster, MD, 1986), II, pp. 170–9 [*Communicantes*], and 248–59 [*Nobis quoque*].

² Kennedy, *The Saints of the Canon*.

³ B. Botte, *L'ordinaire de la messe. Texte critique, traduction et études*, Études liturgiques 2 (Paris and Louvain, 1953).

⁴ *The Order of the Mass* (Vatican City, 2010), pp. 12 and 16 respectively.

⁵ Ed. Kennedy, *The Saints*, p. 8, and Botte, *L'ordinaire de la messe*, pp. 76–8: '*Communicantes* et memoriam venerantes, in primis gloriosae semper virginis Mariae, Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Iesu Christi: sed et beatorum Apostolorum ac Martyrum tuorum Petri et Pauli, Andreae, Iacobi, Ioannis, Thomae, Iacobi, Philippi, Bartholomaei, Matthaei, Simonis et Thaddaei, Lini, Cleti, Clementis, Xysti, Corneli, Cypriani, Laurentii, Chrysogoni, Ioannis et Pauli, Cosmae et Damiani, et omnium sanctorum tuorum...'

⁶ Ed. Kennedy, *The Saints*, p. 9, and Botte, *L'ordinaire de la messe*, p. 84: '*Nobis quoque peccatoribus* famulis tuis, de multitudine miserationum tuarum sperantibus, partem aliquam et

(b) The 'Sacramentarium Veronense' ('Leonine' Sacramentary)

The 'Sacramentarium Veronense' (formerly, and wrongly, known as the 'Leonine Sacramentary', implying an association with Pope Leo I (440–61)), is the copy of a private collection of *libelli missarum*, or pamphlets containing masses for various liturgical occasions, the feast days of martyrs among them. It is preserved in a single manuscript in the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona (MS. 85 [80], written probably at Verona itself in the first quarter of the seventh century).⁷ The masses in question were adapted from the papal liturgy for use by presbyters in Roman *titulus*-churches, and must have been preserved in the papal archives in the Lateran. The collection itself was not intended to be used as a liturgical book per se: the contents are too random and too incomplete to have served as an officiant's mass-book. The masses are arranged according to the liturgical calendar, beginning (presumably) in January; as preserved (the first part, for the period from 1 January to 14 April, has been lost), it would appear that the collection was assembled at Rome at some point during the sixth century, probably between 560 and 590. It is therefore an important early witness to the saints who were commemorated by the Roman church. In what follows I include only commemorations of Roman martyrs for which mass formularies are supplied (omitting SS. Peter and Paul).

June

[26 June] natale SS. Iohannis et Pauli

July

[10 July] natale SS. martyrum Felicis Filippi, in cymeterio Priscillae; Vitalis et Martialis et Alexandri in cymeterio Ior<da>narum; et Silani in cymeterio Maximi, via Salaria; et Ianuari in cymeterio Pretextate, via Appia⁸

August

[2 August] natale S. Stefani in cymeterio Callisti, via Appia

[6 August] natale S. Xysti in cymeterio Callisti; et Felicissimi et Agapiti in cymeterio Praetextate, via Appia⁹

[10 August] natale S. Laurenti

[13 August] natale SS. Ypolyti et Pontiani

[30 August] natale SS. Adauti et Felicis

September

[14 September] natale SS. Corneli et Cypriani

societatem donare digneris, cum tuis sanctis Apostolis et Martyribus, cum Ioanne, Stephano, Matthia, Barnaba, Ignatio, **Alexandro, Marcellino, Petro**, Felicitate, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucia, **Agnete, Caecilia, Anastasia**, et omnibus sanctis tuis...

⁷ See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 38–46, and E. Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. M. Beaumont (Collegeville, MN, 1998), pp. 37–42. As Vogel notes, the title 'Sacramentarium Veronense' is unsuitable as well, since the book is neither a sacramentary nor was intended for the use of the church of Verona. The standard edition is that by L. C. Mohlberg, with L. Eizenhöfer and P. Siffrin, *Sacramentarium Veronense*, Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior. Fontes 1 (Rome, 1956).

⁸ This entry has been copied from the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 (Appendix I, p. 634).

⁹ This entry, too, has been copied from the *Depositio martyrum* of AD 354 (Appendix I, p. 635).

November

- [8 November] natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum
- [22 November] natale S. Caeciliae
- [23 November] natale SS. Clementis et Felicitatis
- [24 November] natale SS. Chrysogoni et Gregori

December

- [25 December] natale Domini; et martyrum Pastoris, Basilei, et Iouiani et Victorini et Eugeniae et Felicitatis et Anastasiae

(c) The 'Old Gelasian Sacramentary' ('Sacramentarium Gelasianum')

The so-called 'Old Gelasian Sacramentary' is the earliest surviving true mass-book. It is preserved in a manuscript written c.750 at the nunnery of Chelles near Paris (now Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 316). The sacramentary itself has little if anything to do with Pope Gelasius (492–6). Its Roman ancestor must have been compiled at some time in the later seventh century, after 628 and before 715 at latest. It presents a presbyteral type of liturgy preserving pre-Gelasian and pre-Gregorian mass *formulae*, combined with another kind of presbyteral book which probably was used in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli in Rome.¹⁰ The 'Old Gelasian Sacramentary' is divided into three separate books, with the Temporale (Book I) being distinguished from the Sanctorale (Book II). I reproduce here the feast days of Roman saints commemorated in the Sanctorale.¹¹

January

- [16 January] In natale S. Marcelli confessoris
- [20 January] In natale SS. martirum Sebastiani; Mari, Martae, Audifax, et Abacuc
- [20 January] In natale S. Fabiani
- [21 January] In natale S. Agnetis uirginis de passione sua
- [28 January] Item in natale eiusdem de natiuitate

February

- [10 February] In natale S. Soteris
- [14 February] Orationes in natale Valentini, Vitalis, et Filiculae

May

- [12 May] In natale SS. Nerei et Acillei fratrum; et S. Pancrati

June

- [2 June] In natale SS. Petri et Marcellini
- [18 June] In natale SS. Marci et Marcelliani
- [25 June] In uigilia martyrum Iohannis et Pauli
- [26 June] Item in natale eiusdem

July

- [28 July] In natale SS. Simplicii, Faustini, et Viatricis
- [30 July] In natale Abdo et Senis

¹⁰ See A. Chavassee, *Le sacramentaire gélasien* (Tournai, 1958), as well as Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 64–70, and Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, pp. 42–6.

¹¹ Ed. H. A. Wilson, *The Gelasian Sacramentary* (Oxford, 1894); Mohlberg et al., *Liber sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae*; and the edition by Chavassee cited in the previous note.

August

- [6 August] In natale S. Syxti
- [9 August] In uigilia S. Laurenti
- [10 August] Item in natale eiusdem
- [11 August] In natale S. Tiburti
- [13 August] In natale S. Ypoliti
- [17 August] In octabas S. Laurenti
- [18 August] In natale S. Agapiti
- [28 August] In natale S. Herm<et>is

September

- [14 September] In natale SS. Corneli et Cibriani
- [27 September] In natale SS. Cosmae et Damiani

November

- [8 November] In natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum Costiani Claudii Castori Simproniani
- [21 November] In natale (*leg.* uigilia) S. Caeciliae
- [22 November] Item in natale eiusdem
- [23 November] In natale S. Clementis
- [the same day] In natale S. Felicitatis
- [29 November] In natale SS. martyru<m> Saturnini Crisanti Mauri Darie e<t> aliorum

(d) The 'Gregorian' Sacramentaries

At some point during the seventh century, the pontifical writing office at the Lateran produced its own distinctive collection of mass formularies. This collection is called 'Gregorian' (although its compilation can no longer be associated with Pope Gregory the Great (590–604)), and was probably assembled during the pontificate of Pope Honorius I (625–38).¹² The distinctive feature of these sacramentaries is that they typically have three prayers for each mass (*oratio, super oblata, ad complendum*), and the masses are not separated into the Temporale and Sanctorale (as in the 'Gelasian Sacramentary'), but consist of a single series stretching from Christmas to the last Sunday of Advent. Of the thirty-five or so sacramentaries classed as 'Gregorian', there are two fundamental types: the so-called *Hadrianum*, a copy of a papal book sent by Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne between 784 and 791 (type I); and the *Paduense*, a copy of the papal sacramentary as it had been adapted to presbyteral use at St Peter's on the Vatican, probably c.670 or 680 (type II).¹³ These Gregorian sacramentaries throw valuable light on the cult of martyrs in seventh-century Rome, because they provide two kinds of evidence: they provide mass sets for the feast days of the martyrs themselves, and they specify the locations of stational masses, thereby giving a clear indication of which were the principal intra-urban martyrial churches of Rome. In

¹² On the Gregorian sacramentaries, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 79–102, and Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, pp. 48–55.

¹³ The standard edition is that by J. Deshusses, *Le sacramentaire Grégorien. Ses principales formes d'après les plus anciens manuscrits*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., Spicilegium Friburgense 16, 24, and 28 (Fribourg, 1971–82).

what follows, the feast days of martyrs whose *passiones* are translated in the present volume and who are commemorated according to the calendar dates given in types I and II of the Gregorian sacramentaries, for which mass sets are provided, in the usual form (e.g.) ‘natale S. Marcelli papae’ are given. In the case of stational churches, I provide, in parentheses, references to the church in question as described by Krautheimer, *CBCR*.

January

- [16 January] natale S. Marcelli papae
- [20 January] natale S. Fauiani
- [the same day] natale S. Sebastiani
- [21 January] natale S. Agnae
- [28 January] natale S. Agnae secundo

February

- [14 February] natale S. Valentini

Easter tide

- [Septuagesima Sunday] ad S. Laurentium foris murum (II, 1–144)
- [Friday after Quinquagesima Sunday] ad SS. Iohannem et Paulum (I, 267–303)
- [Tuesday after the first Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Anastasiam (I, 42–61)
- [Friday after the first Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium in Formosum (II, 185)
- [Monday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Clementem (I, 117–36)
- [Wednesday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Caeciliam (I, 94–111)
- [Saturday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad SS. Marcellinum et Petrum (II, 193–206)
- [third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium foris murum (II, 1–144)
- [Tuesday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Pudencianam (III, 277–303)
- [Wednesday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Sixtum (IV, 163–77)
- [Friday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium in Lucina (II, 159–84)
- [Saturday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Susannam (IV, 254–78)
- [Monday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad SS. Quattuor Coronatos (IV, 1–36)
- [Tuesday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium in Damaso (II, 147–53)
- [Friday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Eusebium (I, 210–16)
- [Saturday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium foris murum (II, 1–144)
- [Monday after Sunday *in mediana*] ad S. Chrysogonum (I, 144–64)
- [Wednesday after Sunday *in mediana*] ad S. Marcellum (II, 207–17)
- [Monday of the second week after Easter] ad S. Praxidem (III, 232–59)

April

- [14 April] natale SS. Tiburtii et Valeriani
- [25 April = Laetania maior] ad S. Laurentium in Lucina (II, 159–84)

May

- [3 May] natale SS. Alexandri, Euenti, et Theoduli
- [10 May] natale SS. Gordiani et Epimachi

[12 May] natale S. Pancratii

[25 May] natale S. Urbani papae

June

[2 June] natale SS. Marcellini et Petri

[18 June] natale SS. Marci et Marcelliani

[26 June] natale SS. Iohannis et Pauli

July

[2 July] natale SS. Processi et Martiniani

[10 July] natale Septem Fratrum

[29 July] natale SS. Felicis <papae> et Simplicii et Faustini et Beatricis

[30 July] natale SS. Abdon et Sennes

August

[2 August] natale S. Stephani episcopi

[6 August] natale S. Sixti episcopi

[9 August] vigilia S. Laurenti

[10 August] natale S. Laurenti

[11 August] natale S. Tiburti

[13 August] natale S. Yppoliti

[14 August] natale S. Eusebi presbyteri

[28 August] natale S. Hermetis

[29 August] natale S. Sabinae

[30 August] natale SS. Felicis et Adaucti

September

[11 September] natale SS. Proti et Hyacinthi

[14 September] natale SS. Corneli et Cypriani

[15 September] natale S. Nicomedis

October

[7 October] natale S. Marci papae

[14 October] natale S. Callisti papae

November

[8 November] natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum

[22 November] natale S. Caeciliae

[23 November] natale S. Clementis

[the same day] natale S. Felicitatis

[24 November] natale S. Chrysogoni

[29 November] natale S. Saturnini

(e) *The Capitulare evangeliorum* of Würzburg

The gospel lectionary was a book which specified the gospel readings for mass. One such lectionary, now Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. fol. 62 (a manuscript possibly written in England, c.700) preserves a list of gospel readings for the liturgical year, compiled at Rome between 642 and 672, and transmitted to Würzburg apparently by way of England.¹⁴ The list was helpfully edited by Germain Morin in 1911;¹⁵

¹⁴ See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, pp. 339–40, and Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, pp. 94–7.

¹⁵ Morin, 'Liturgie et basiliques de Rome'.

I reprint from Morin's edition those feasts which are relevant to the martyrs of Rome who are represented by *passiones* translated in the present volume—including references both to churches, esp. *titulus*-churches, dedicated to martyrs (given in the form *ad [ecclesiam]* or *in ecclesia*), and also to the martyrs' own feast days (given in the form *natale S. [sancti]*), where it is understood that the mass is to be celebrated at the church bearing the name of the martyr(s) in question. Because the purpose of the following list is to illustrate the cult of martyrs in seventh-century Rome, and not the development of liturgical readings, I have not reproduced the specifications of chapter and verse given against each feast. Note that, like the Gregorian sacramentaries discussed above, the gospel lectionary of Würzburg provides evidence both of martyrs' feast days (signalled by the word *natale*) and of the martyrial churches in which station masses were held (signalled by the words *in ecclesia*).

December

[25 December] ad S. Anastasiam (*missa secunda*)

January

[first Sunday after Epiphany] in ecclesia SS. Iohannis et Pauli

[16 January] natale S. Marcelli

[second Sunday after Epiphany] in ecclesia S. Eusebi

[20 January] natale S. Fabiani papae

[20 January] natale S. Sebastiani

[21 January] natale S. Agnetis

[28 January] Octavas S. Agnetis

February

[14 February] natale S. Valentini

Easter tide

[Sunday in Septuagesima] ad S. Laurentium

[Wednesday in Quinquagesima] collecta ad S. Anastasiam, statio ad S. Sabinam

[Friday in Quinquagesima] in Pammachii (ad SS. Iohannem et Paulum)

[Tuesday of Quadragesima] ad S. Anastasiam

[Monday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Clementem

[Wednesday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Caeciliam

[Saturday after the second Sunday in Quadragesima] ad SS. Marcellinum et Petrum

[third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium (foris murum)

[Monday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Marcum

[Tuesday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Pudencianam

[Wednesday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Sixtum

[Friday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium (in Lucina)

[Saturday after the third Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Susannam

[Monday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad SS. Quattuor Coronatos

[Tuesday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium (in Damaso)

[Friday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Eusebium

[Saturday after the fourth Sunday in Quadragesima] ad S. Laurentium (foris murum)

[Monday after Sunday in *Mediana*] ad S. Chrysogonum

[Wednesday after Sunday in *Mediana*] ad S. Marcellum

[Monday after Palm Sunday] ad SS. Nereum et Achilleum

April

[14 April] natale SS. Tiburtii, Valeriani et Maximi

May

[3 May] natale SS. Alexandri, Eventii et Theoduli

[10 May] natale S. Gordiani

[12 May] natale SS. Nerei et Achillei

[12 May] natale S. Pancratii

[19 May] natale S. Pudentianae

[Tuesday after Pentecost] ad S. Anastasiam

June

[2 June] natale SS. Marcellini et Petri

[9 June] natale SS. Primi et Feliciani

[18 June] natale SS. Marci et Marcelliani

[26 June] natale SS. Iohannis et Pauli

July

[2 July] natale SS. Processi et Martiniani

[10 July] natale SS. Septem Fratrum [i.e. the seven sons of St Felicitas]: prima missa ad Aquilonem, secunda ad S. Alexandrum; <tertia> ad S. Felicitatem

[21 July] natale S. Praxedis

[28 July] natale SS. Felicis <papae>; Simplicii, Faustini, et Beatricis

[30 July] natale SS. Abdon et Sennes

August

[2 August] natale S. Stephani pontificis

[9 August] vigilia S. Laurenti

[10 August] natale S. Laurenti

[13 August] natale S. Hippolyti

[14 August] natale S. Eusebi

[28 August] natale S. Hermetis

[29 August] natale S. Sabinae

[30 August] natale SS. Felicis et Adaucti

September

[11 September] natale SS. Proti et Hyacinthi

[14 September] natale S. Corneli papae

[15 September] natale S. Nicomedis

October

[14 October] natale S. Callisti papae

November

[1 November] natale S. Caesari

[8 November] natale SS. Quattuor Coronatorum

[21 November] natale S. Caeciliae

[23 November] natale SS. Clementis et Felicitatis

[24 November] natale S. Chrysogoni

[29 November] natale S. Saturnini

Glossary

adiutor: the principal assistant in the office of any of the principal magistracies, such as those of the *comes rei privatae*; the *adiutor* ranked beneath the *princeps* (q.v.) and the *cornicularius* (q.v.).

agentes in rebus: agents of the imperial civil service, with responsibility for overseeing government operations such as the imperial post, and reporting any abuses of the system; they formed, in effect, a secret service of government spies.

arcarius numeri: ‘treasurer of finance’, an official in the department of the *comes rei privatae* responsible for collecting rents on all properties belonging to the imperial Privy Purse (*res privata*).

arenarium (correctly **harenarium**): literally a ‘sandpit’; the term came to refer to any excavation in the tufa, and hence could refer to a hypogean cemetery (catacomb).

assessor: a legal adviser who assisted emperors and *iudices* in a judicial hearing (*cognitio* [q.v.]); cf. also *togatus*.

campidoctor: a military drill-master.

carcerarius: a prison warder, a post subordinate to the *commentariensis* (q.v.).

catabulum: a stable for the animals of the imperial post (the *cursus publicus*).

cognitio: the term used to denote trial before a magistrate (such as the urban prefect or his deputy, or a provincial governor).

comes: ‘Count’, a member of the imperial *comitium* (q.v.) or *consistorium*, the emperor’s advisory body, which from the time of Constantine consisted of the *magister officiorum* (q.v.), the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (q.v.), the *comes rei privatae* (q.v.), and various palatine officers, the *comites domesticorum*. There were three ranks of *comites*, entitled *comes primi ordinis*, *comes secundi ordinis*, and *comes tertii ordinis*. After legislation of Constantine promulgated in 331, imperial *comites* were given authority to conduct criminal trials and pass capital sentences.

comes rei privatae: Count of the Privy Purse, managed all the imperial estates, and was responsible for the collection of rent from them.

comes sacrarum largitionum: Count of Public Finances, the senior financial officer of the imperial *comitium*, a very senior post (of *illustris* rank) carrying responsibility for the gold and silver mines as well as coinage and mints throughout the Empire, and for the payment of cash stipends and donatives to the army and civil service as well as for the supply of military clothing, and for collecting certain taxes.

comes utriusque militiae: see *magister utriusque militiae*.

comitium: the imperial consistory (also called the *consistorium*), an advisory body to the emperor, first established by Constantine, and consisting of *comites* ('counts') of various status (that is, of first, second, or third rank: *primi, secundi, tertii ordinis*), of which the most senior *ex officio* were the *comes et quaestor*, the *comes et magister officiorum* (q.v.), the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (q.v.), and the *comes rei privatae* (q.v.), as well as the praetorian prefect, *praefectus praetorio* (q.v.) and the palatine officers (*comites domesticorum*).

commentariensis: the official of the judicial bureau responsible for keeping records of prisoners and seeing that sentences were duly carried out (for the purpose of which he supervised a staff of torturers); in short, the prison registrar.

commentarius: an agent of the *commentariensis*.

conductor: the contractor or chief tenant of an estate; cf. below, s.v. *procurator*.

confessio: the term originally referred to the place where a saint had been martyred, but it came to refer to a shrine in a hypogean crypt located beneath the main altar of a martyrial church.

consistorium: see *comitium*.

consul: the title originally pertained to the two senior magistrates who during the Roman Republic were elected to office annually for one year, and who were responsible for the government of the state. Under the empire the government was taken over by the emperors, so that consuls had very little authority but great prestige, to the point where emperors very frequently nominated themselves as consuls.

consularis: a high-ranking provincial governor, usually of the clarissimate; the post of *consularis* was established by Constantine.

contractor: see *conductor*.

cornicularius: a senior official in a government office, notably (in these fictional *passiones*) in the judicial department of the (urban) prefecture.

creditaris: a personal depository, fiduciary, financial trustee.

crypta: 'crypt'; an underground passageway, or gallery in an underground cemetery or catacomb.

cubiculum: a chamber within a hypogean cemetery which might typically house a number of burials (some of them regarded as martyrs), and hence became a martyrial shrine.

cubicularius: the chamberlain of the imperial household.

defensor ecclesiae: a 'protector of the Church', a position which was concerned with the legal rights of the Church; the post was usually filled by a layman with legal expertise. From the time of Gregory the Great, if not earlier, there were seven *defensores* in Rome, one for each of the seven ecclesiastical regions; the most senior *defensor* was entitled *primicerius* (q.v.).

delator: an informer who betrayed or denounced a Christian to the authorities. If the Christian was brought to trial and convicted, the *delator* might stand to gain a quarter of the Christian's estate; but if the Christian was acquitted, the *delator* could himself face charges of 'malicious prosecution' (*calumnia*), and himself be subject to trial and torture.

deportatio: in the years of the principate, Roman citizens of the senatorial class (*honestiores*) convicted of a capital crime were sentenced to exile rather than execution (except in cases of *maiestas* or treason, in which case the death penalty was inevitable). The exile might be one of two kinds: *deportatio* or 'capital exile', entailing banishment and confiscation of all private property; and *relegatio*, 'non-capital exile' (q.v.).

diaetarius palatii (less correctly *zetarius*): the house-steward of the imperial palace.

dux: technically the term refers to the military commander of a field army in frontier provinces; but in the *passiones* the term is also used in a non-technical sense to describe any sort of leader, e.g. of a detachment of soldiers.

fermentum: the eucharistic host (bread = the body of the Lord) consecrated by the pope and then distributed to the various *titulus*- or parish churches of Rome, so that local priests celebrating mass would be doing so in communion with the pope, who obviously could not be present every time mass was celebrated in a Roman church.

iudex: a 'judge'. *Iudex* is not the formal title of a magistracy, but simply a function adopted by senior magistrates, such as the urban prefect, sitting in tribunal in criminal trials.

loculus: a niche carved in the tufa of a catacomb designed to accommodate one body; the *loculus* was sealed by a marble slab which bore an inscription giving the name of the person interred within, and (usually) that of the person who provided the burial.

magister admissionum: the official who controlled access to the emperor.

magister equitum: 'Master of the Horse', the supreme commander of the Roman cavalry, a post created by Constantine; cf. *magister peditum*, the supreme commander of the Roman infantry. By the fifth century, the two posts were combined in the *magister utriusque militiae*.

magister officiorum: 'Master of the Offices', a very senior magistrate (of *illustris* rank) created by Constantine. The *magister officiorum* was in charge of the imperial bodyguard (the *domestici*), the imperial post (*cursus publicus*), and the secretarial staffs of the various palace offices (*sacra scrinia*); he was also in charge of a staff of *magistriani* (q.v.), who inter alia acted as *agentes in rebus* to oversee (or spy on) those using the imperial post (*cursus publicus*).

magister peditum: 'Master of the Foot', the supreme commander of the infantry of the Roman field armies, a post created by Constantine; cf. *magister equitum*, the supreme commander of the Roman cavalry. By the fifth century, the two posts were combined in the *magister utriusque militiae*.

magister utriusque militiae: ‘Master of Foot and Horse’, the supreme commander of the Roman field armies, an office of overwhelming power whose holder controlled all affairs, domestic and military. The title was apparently first used in the fifth century (Aetius, for example, held this office and in effect ruled the empire on behalf of Valentinian III).

magistrianus: originally the term referred to a civil servant in the office of the Master of the Offices; but it subsequently came to refer specifically to *agentes in rebus* (q.v.), who were responsible for overseeing government operations such as the imperial post and were, in effect, a secret service of government spies.

maiestas: treason against the emperor (which might merely involve speaking slightly of the emperor, or refusing to sacrifice to his divine person), for which the punishment was death.

matrina: a woman who stood as sponsor in baptism to a female catechumen.

patrinus: a man who stood as sponsor in baptism to a male catechumen; also referred to in the *passiones* as a *pater susceptionis*.

patronus: the term used in the fictional *passiones* to describe the senior official responsible for the local government of each of the fourteen civil regions of Rome; the usual term for this official is *curator*.

praefectus praetorio: the praetorian prefect, who was originally the commander of the imperial bodyguard; but from the time of Constantine onwards the empire was divided into three huge administrative units, each of them under the authority of a praetorian prefect: of the East (including the dioceses of Thrace, Asiana, Pontica, and Oriens), of the Gauls (including Britain and Spain, plus the two Gallic dioceses), and Italy (including Pannonia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Africa, as well as Italy itself). This last huge prefecture was subsequently subdivided into an Illyrian diocese and a diocese consisting of suburbicarian Italy and Africa. Praetorian prefects were responsible for overseeing legal as well as financial matters, including collection of tax and general provincial administration; they had the authority to issue edicts and their jurisdiction was inappellable. The praetorian prefect was assisted by a ‘deputy’ (*vicarius*), who could assume all the prefect’s functions.

praefectus urbi (less correctly, *urbis*): the urban prefect, who was appointed by the emperor, usually for a year or two, and had supreme jurisdiction over the city of Rome and (from the time of Septimius Severus onwards) an area of 100 miles around Rome. The urban prefect was answerable to the emperor alone; he acted as chairman of the senate, and was chosen from the highest senatorial rank (*illustris*). The urban prefect was assisted by a ‘deputy’ (*vicarius*), who could assume all the prefect’s functions.

praepositus sacri cubiculi: the chief of the imperial bedchamber, or grand chamberlain, who was in effect the head of the private household of the emperor, and had unique access to the emperor, and therefore immense influence. From the fourth century onwards, the grand chamberlains were usually eunuchs, appointed because they were thought to be more trustworthy.

praeses: a provincial governor, of lower rank than a *proconsul* or *consularis*.

primicerius: a chief officer or superintendent; the *primicerius notariorum*, for example, was the chief secretary of the imperial administration.

primicerius sacri cubiculi: the chief executive officer of the imperial household.

primiscrinii: the head of the judicial office of the prefecture.

princeps: the term is frequently used of the emperor himself; but in terms of the civil service, it refers to the highest-ranking officer in a government office.

proconsul: a high-ranking governor of certain provinces, such as Africa.

procurator: the landowner's agent, with overall responsibility for the management of an estate; cf. above, s.v. *conductor*. (Whereas the *conductor* leased the estate from the landowner or his agent, the *procurator* was the agent directly employed by the landowner.)

quaestionarius: literally an 'interrogator' who took part in the procedure of criminal trials; but, in effect, the *quaestionarius* functioned as a torturer.

relegatio: in the early years of the principate, Roman citizens of the senatorial class (*honestiores*) convicted of a capital crime were sentenced to exile rather than execution (except in cases of *maiestas* or treason, in which case the death penalty was inevitable). The exile might be one of two kinds: *deportatio* or 'capital exile' (q.v.), or *relegatio*, in which the citizen was banished from Rome but was allowed to retain possession of his wealth and property.

scrinium: literally an archive, but used to refer to the writing office of an imperial bureau, including its *scriniarii* and notaries.

servus: in the *passiones* of Roman martyrs, the word *servus* almost invariably means 'slave' rather than 'servant' (the latter term having connotations of the domestic servants who were ubiquitous in well-to-do British households before the Second World War). A number of the *passiones* describe the manumission of slaves on the occasion of their owner becoming a Christian.

stational mass: a mass celebrated by the pope at one of the *titulus*-churches or 'stations' of Rome. The pope obviously could not celebrate mass at every parish church in Rome; so over the years a fixed schedule was established whereby the pope would celebrate mass at a specified church on a specified feast day. These stational masses are recorded in the early Roman mass books; e.g. on Septuagesima Sunday the pope celebrated mass at the basilica of St Laurence on the Via Tiburtina (S. Lorenzo fuori le mura).

titulus-church: a building in Rome, usually a basilica or large hall, which had been gifted to the Church by a wealthy donor to be used for Christian worship; the conveyance was recorded by a title-deed, or *titulus*. Although the names of these donors have been preserved (e.g. in the name of the church, as *titulus Aemilianae*, a building gifted by an unknown donor named Aemiliana), none of them can be identified. There were some twenty-five *titulus*-churches in Rome in 499; many of them came to be associated with the name of a martyr.

togatus: originally meant a member of the senatorial class who wore a toga; but by the fifth century it had come to mean a legal adviser who performed the same function as an *assessor* (q.v.).

tribunus militum: a military tribune was a senior officer within a legion (there were six tribunes in a legion), and accordingly the position was normally filled by a young man of senatorial or equestrian rank; but a tribune might also command a cohort of soldiers from the urban troops, and this is the role most frequently encountered in the fictional *passiones*.

vicarius: the deputy of a prefect, who was able to act with the prefect's full authority. Both the praetorian prefect and the urban prefect had deputies who could act in their place.

vicedominus: the vice-mayor of a provincial town.

zetarius: see *diaetarius palatii*.

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